FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
PRESENTS

HOW TO DRAW AND PAINT

FANTASY *Females*

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VOLUME 2

Master scribbling techniques,
turn to page 22

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX PRESENTS

HOW TO DRAW AND PAINT

FANTASY Females

Welcome…

Whether you're at school or college, embarking on an art career or just happy to find an outlet for your creative urges, I'm sure you'll find inspiration and helpful advice in this collection of expert workshops.

This second special edition of ImagineFX builds on the excellent art advice we're known for, and is the perfect resource for anyone wanting to learn female character design and portraits. The 19 workshops collected here, by some of the world's best professional digital artists, will give you a grounding in core art skills and software knowledge.

Each step-by-step workshop offers accessible guidance on everything from posing portraits, painting skin tones and rendering fabrics to setting scenes, adding narrative detail and unlocking the teasing nature of pin-up.

Every workshop is backed by resources on the accompanying disc, offering the chance to get closer to the final image with the same textures and brushes our artists use. Plus, video tutorial and high-resolution art files enable you to follow the steps digitally.

If you're new to ImagineFX, turn to page 105 to see the digital art workshops, interviews and inspiration we offer every month. If you like what you see, there's a special subscription offer on page 31.

If you enjoy this volume of ImagineFX Presents, keep an eye out for further editions: for more details go to page 115. If you have any questions, please get in touch with me at the email address below.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

From the makers of
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

We're the only magazine dedicated to fantasy and sci-fi art. Our aim is to help artists to improve both their traditional and digital art skills. Visit www.imaginefx.com to find out more!

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US and Canadian readers: please turn to page 43.

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
PRESENTS

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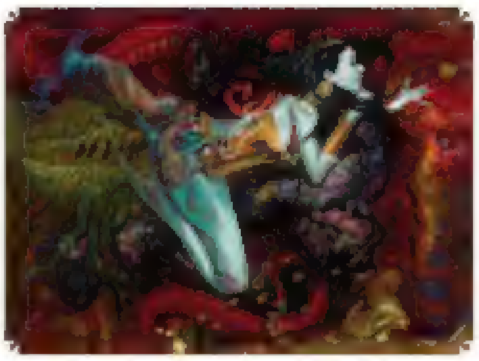

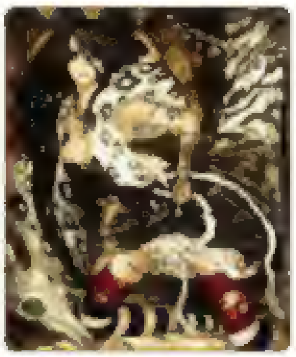

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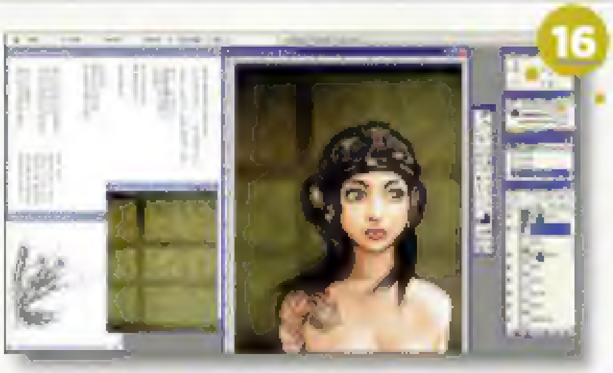

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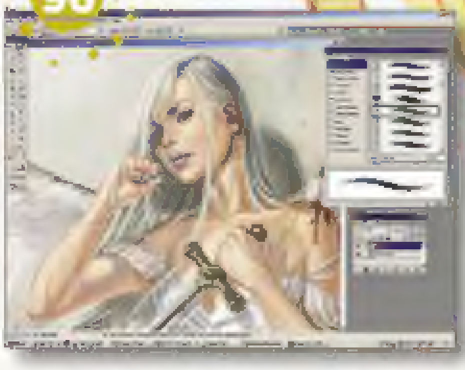

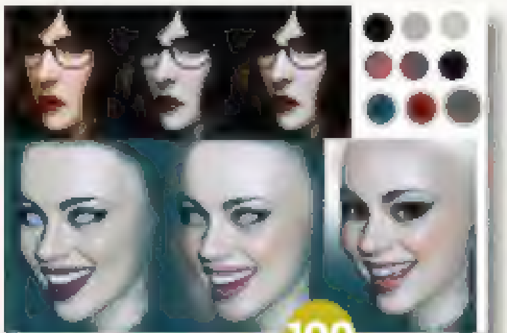

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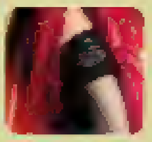

Katarina Sokolova
Paint realistic looking satin gloves and sexy stockings with the help of this portrait specialist.

Emma Vieceli
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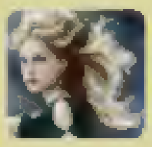

Melanie Delon
This acclaimed digital artist will help you bring movement into your fantasy females' hair.

ON YOUR FREE DISC

Sketches and videos to help you learn…

Highlights include...

Marta Dahlig
Free brushes, layered files and colour palettes to enable you to perfect your skin tones.

David Sourwine
Create your own fabrics with David's workshop video.

Katarina Sokolova
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Turn to page 114 for more

ImagineFX
FANTASY
Females
Videos and reference to help you develop your digital art skills

Includes three hours of video!

The Gallery

SHOWCASING THE FEMALE PORTRAIT IN FANTASY ART

Jeong Won-An

LOCATION: South Korea
WEB: http://maggi.new21.net
EMAIL: ssbur0@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

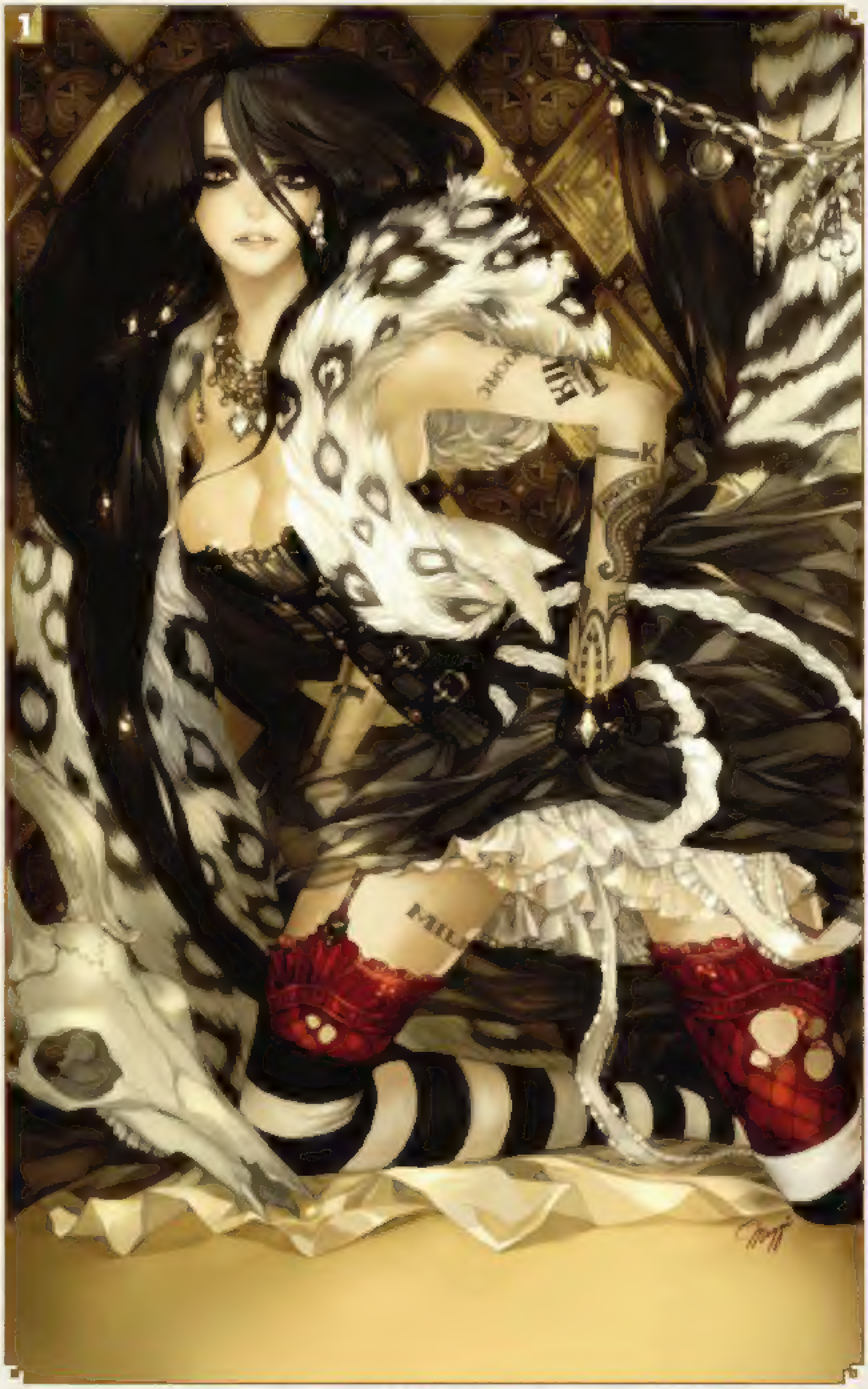
"When I was young, I imagined I'd be a painter," says Jeong, "because I had no talent except for painting." She humbly channelled her energy into traditional painting, until she was introduced to Photoshop in her first year of college. "I decided to become a game character designer, and soon after, Nexon, a games company in Korea, offered me a job."

For a long time, Jeong worried that her paintings suffered from being too flat. "I brood over such things," she admits, "so I decided to change my weak points to good points and focused more on details."

1 BLACK
This was created for Comic World, a Korean comics event, much like Comic-Con. "I did December in their 2009 calendar, so I used warm colours and fur to fight the winter cold."

2 KOREAN GISAENG
This is a Gisaeng, which is like a Geisha but Korean. "Gisaeng are very intelligent, and specialise in dance, poetry and music. When I worked on this, I realised that I should study Korea's history more."

1



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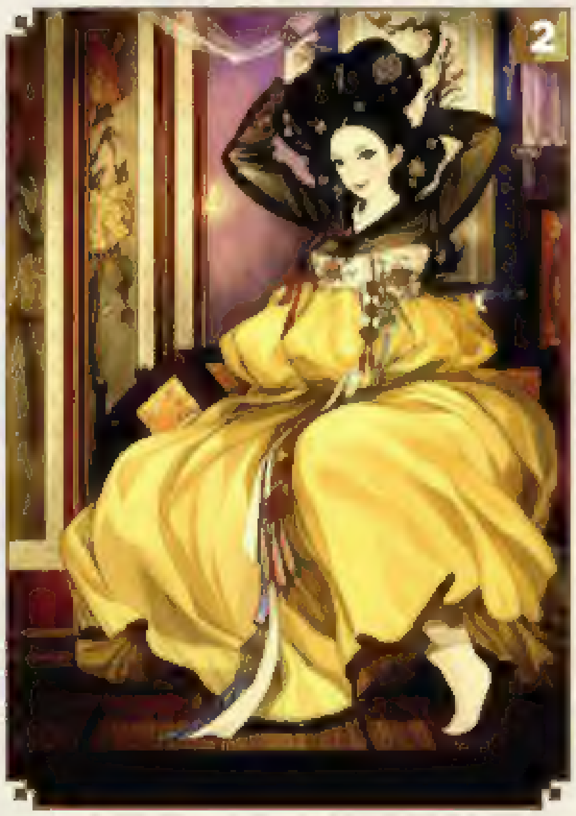
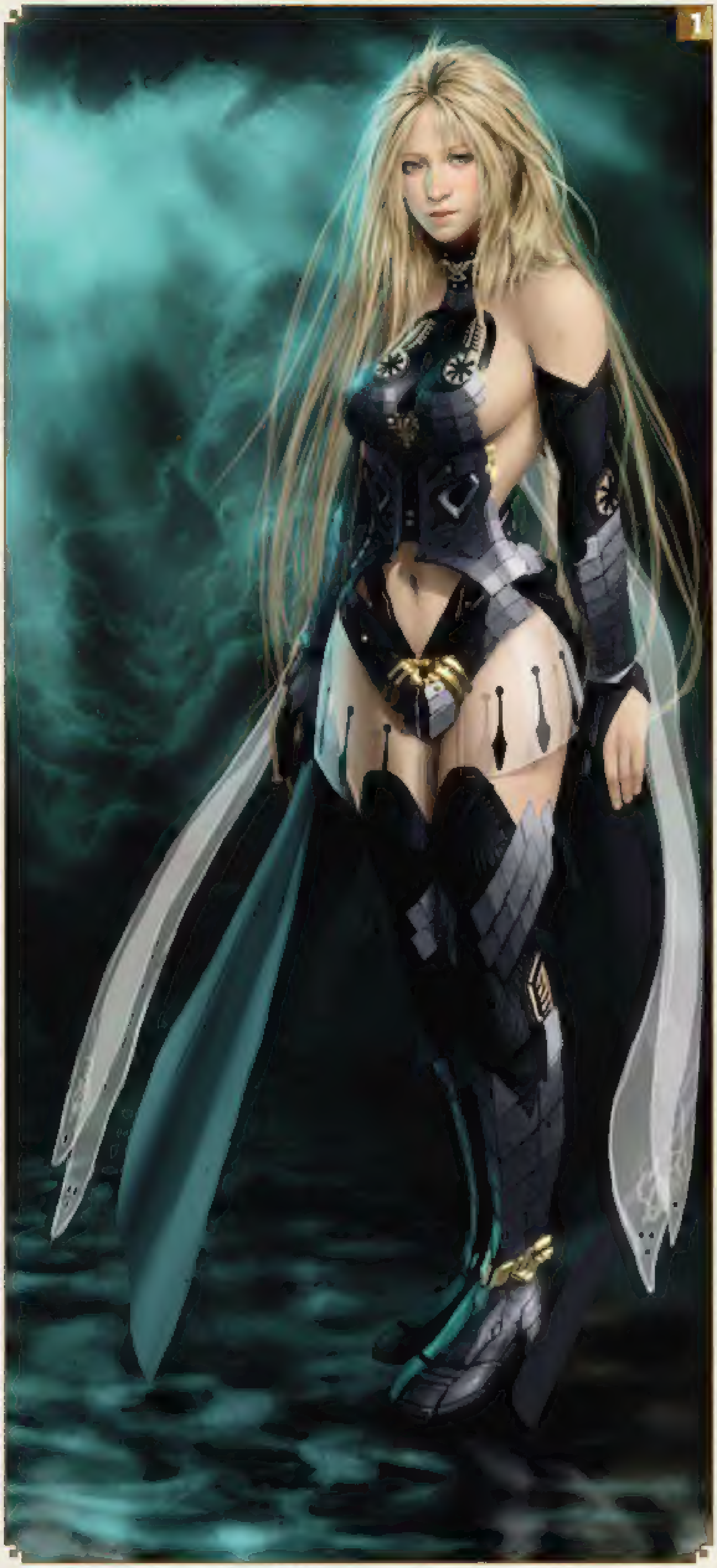
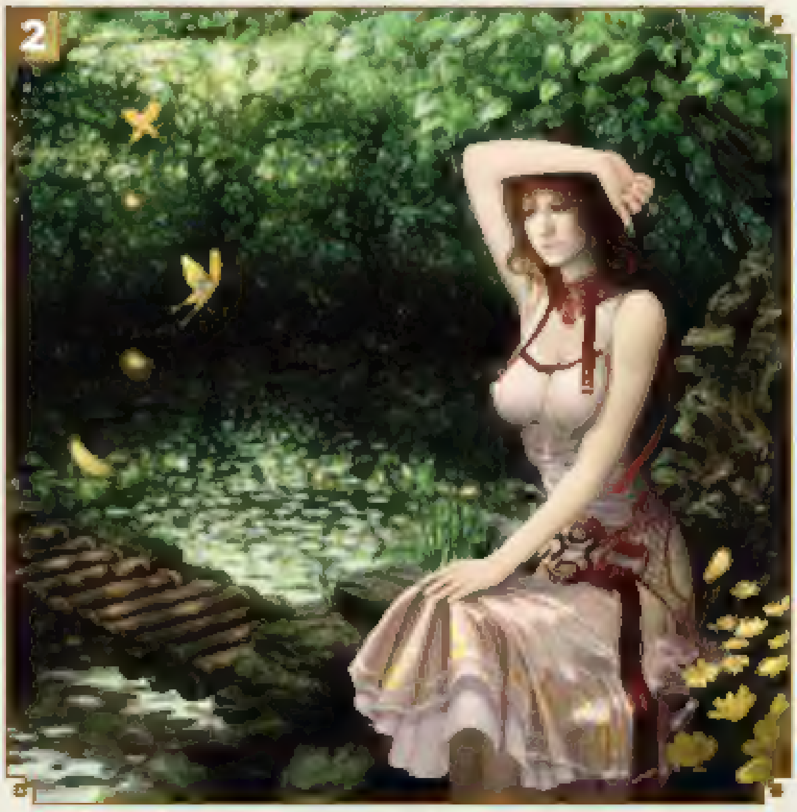






Randy Liu

LOCATION: US
WEB: idnar.cgsociety.org
EMAIL: kexblade@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

"I've been drawing my whole life, but I got into digital art when I was about 13," says Randy. "I started with Microsoft Paint, as I'm sure many others did, before getting into Photoshop. I began with Julie Dillon's Photoshop tutorials, which formed the basis of my whole digital art technique."

Many different artists inspire him, he says: "My biggest influences are Yoshiyuki Sadamoto (Evangelion), Shinkiro (King of Fighters) and Hyung-tae Kim, who formed the foundation of my style.

"Right now, I'm working as a graphics programmer at a game company – which is related to my art in a way, but not much. I do hope my art will be more involved in my work in the future."

1 **CG GIRL 56** "This is my most recent work and probably my most detailed. It took me about 40 hours, on and off. She's a character I draw quite often, but this is a new outfit for her and perhaps it's a bit out of character."

2 **CG GIRL 50** "I'm not very creative with names," Randy freely admits, "so my convention is generally just 'subject name/time subject drawn'. This, I think, is the second most detailed background I've done."

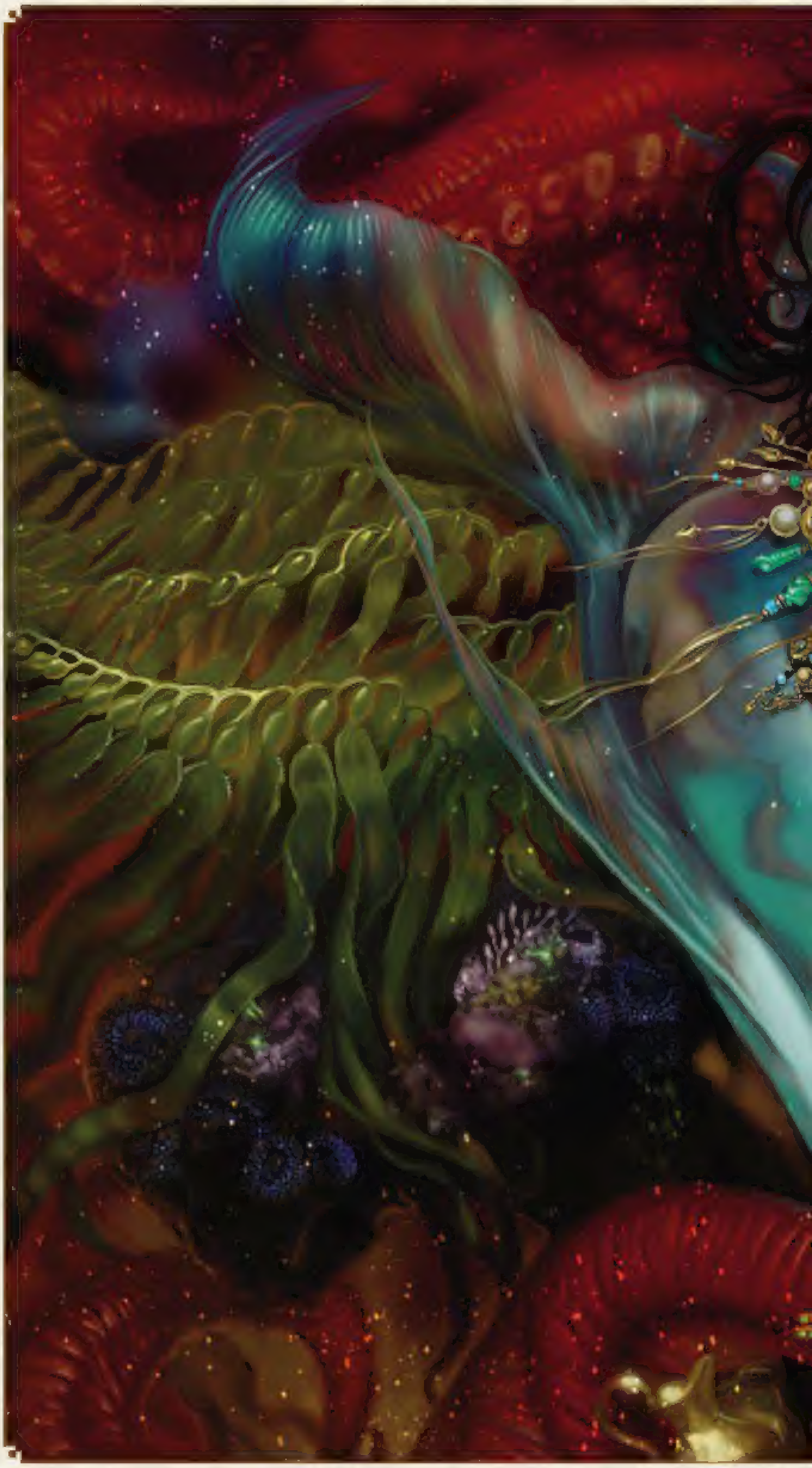
The Gallery

Kurt Williams
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.kurtalanwilliams.com
EMAIL: williamsart@comcast.net
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Prior to the explosion of the games industry, Kurt worked as an architectural illustrator and freelance airbrush artist for ad agencies in Chicago. "For the last 13 years I've been working in video games," he says, "starting back in the coin-op days for Midway, and now as an environment artist for Raven Software."

All the digital art here has been painted in his spare time. "When I received a request to be part of Marta Dahlig's artist gallery for Ballistic's d'artiste Digital Painting 2 book, I was floored," he says. "Even though I've been making a living at art for a while now, it's still very exciting when something like that happens."

1 THE DEVIL'S MERMAID This was one of the first paintings that Kurt completed in Photoshop. "It was also the submission accepted into Digital Painting 2," he says. "The main thing I wanted to accomplish was to paint an underwater scene using anything but an underwater palette."



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Every issue of ImagineFX features a selection of fantastic artwork from talented artists – and you could join them. For a chance to see your artwork included in ImagineFX, send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece, a photo of yourself and your contact details.

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1

Painting portraits

Learn to pose and paint exotic and lifelike portraits

> “Colour, blending, brush usage and custom texturing are equally important in a convincing effect”
>
> Marta Dahlig, page 12

Workshop files are on your disc

Your guide to fantasy portraits

Start by understanding the principles that have underpinned portraiture for centuries, such as capturing the person's essence and creating the ideal backdrop. Then take your image in a more exotic direction to bring out the fantasy in your female.

Master highlights, shadows and midtones in your portraits. Turn to page 12.

Workshops

How to paint perfect portraits

Artist
PROFILE

[illegible]

Painter & Photoshop

UNDER YOUR SKIN

Marta Dahlig explains everything you need to know about creating four kinds of realistic complexion for your portraits

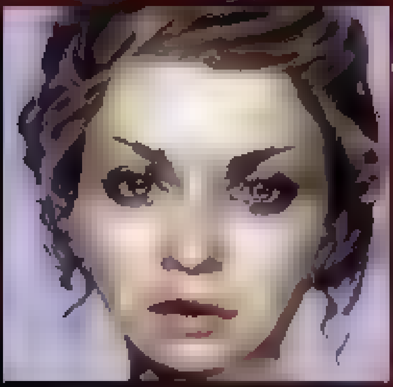
Painting skin is one of the hardest tasks faced by every photo-realistic painter, due to the number of factors that make up a final effect. Colour choices, blending techniques, special brush usage and custom texturing are all equally important in achieving a truly convincing effect. Different types of skin require a different approach and therefore a distinct combination of these elements. A delicate porcelain skin tone requires a similar technique to typical baby skin, but will drastically differ to darker skin rendition methods.

In this workshop, I'll cover the main differences between portraying major types of complexions, and discuss some basic anatomy notes and useful brushes, as well as tips and tricks for achieving certain effects. While I'm talking about a particular skin tone, I'll also share variations of colour palettes for you to study or use in your own paintings.

The workshop will not contain much on the basics of face painting: it's aimed at those already possessing a basic understanding and skill in painting faces, including general rules of colour application and blending techniques.

To get the most from this workshop, you should own any version of Photoshop or Painter from version 6 onwards, as well as a graphics tablet. To help you further with this workshop, I've included my colour palettes on the disc.

PORCELAIN SKIN

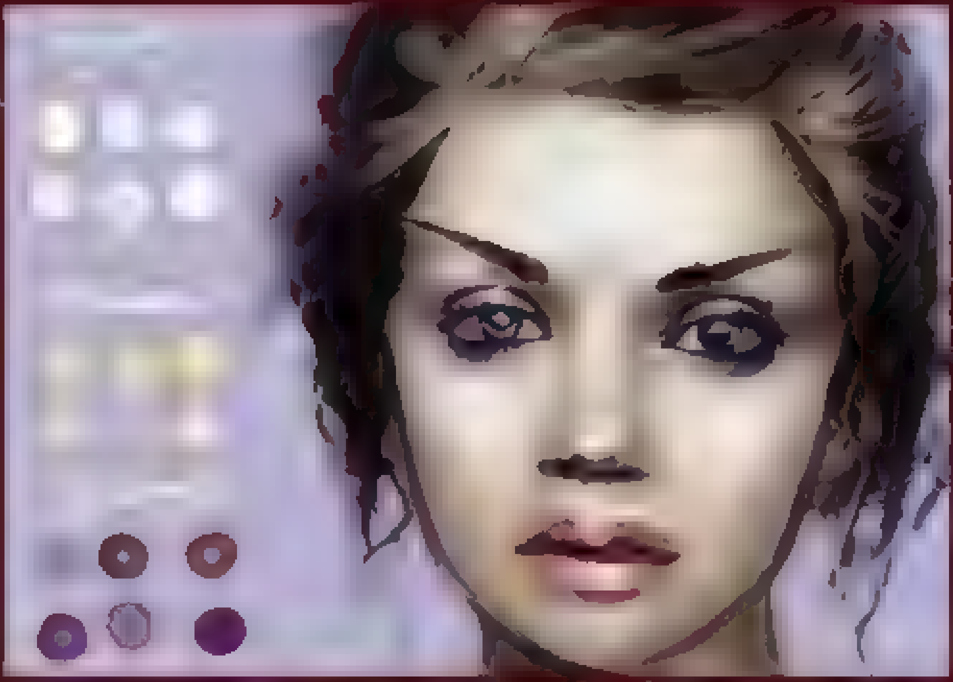


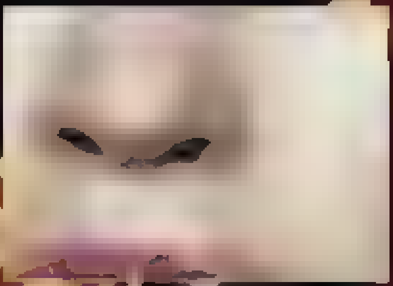
Important colours

No matter what type of skin you paint, the highlights, shadows and midtones should all be different hues. This rule is especially important in achieving porcelain tones.

Usually, this effect is created with a lightly saturated midtone and a bluish shadow. What I personally find key to achieving this effect, however, is the highlight. There are many possibilities, but a light turquoise/green highlight creates one of the core effects of this complexion: its fresh, fragile glow.

When you have your palette, sketch a basic face. Use any tools you like, but try to avoid the Airbrush for now.

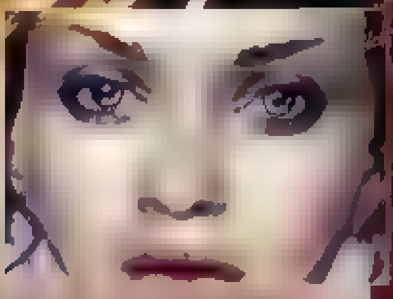




Smooth it up!

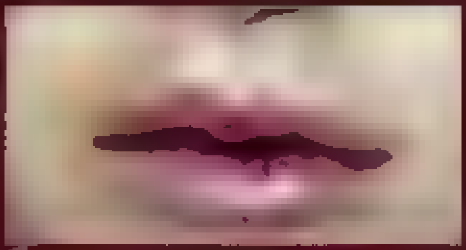
Blending is the second most important factor in achieving a porcelain skin effect. Usually, it might be good to solely use rougher blenders for additional texture, but in this case you want the blending to be perfectly smooth.

In order to achieve this effect, first blend with rougher blenders (try Hard Round in Photoshop or Blender in Painter) to define the shapes. Later, you should move on to soft blenders (for example, Just Add Water from Painter or any Airbrush used on a low opacity) to soften the transitions.



Forget texturing

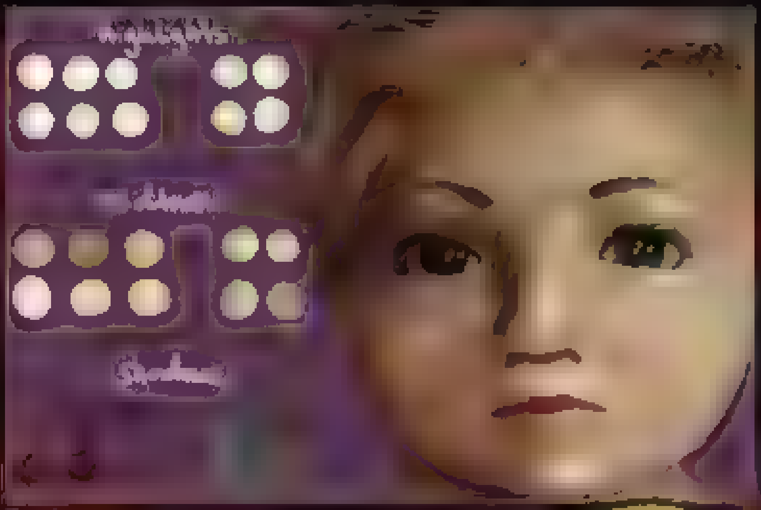
Even though I always underline the necessity of using textures in order to achieve extreme realism, the porcelain skin tone is an exception from this rule. I would usually advise painting in tiny skin pores for skin texture, but it's better to skip this step in this case. Instead, pick a colour for your highlight then, with an Airbrush, run over the most convex areas of the face, which are the forehead, chin, cheekbones, eyebrows and the tip of the nose. Make the highlights really bold by using a high opacity in order to create that glowing skin effect I mentioned in the first step.

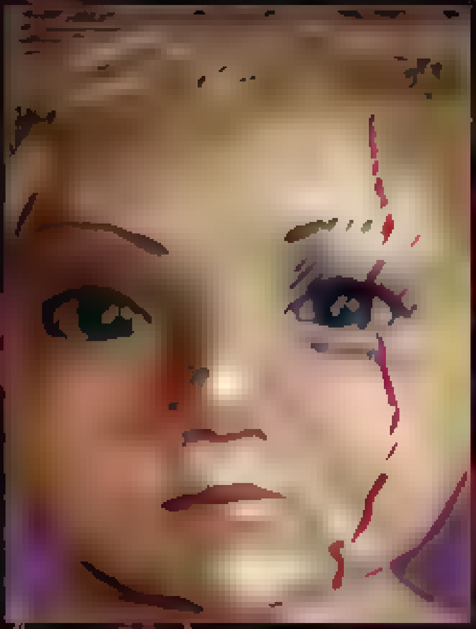


Final retouches

You can use some extra tricks to underline the skin's softness to a higher extent. Airbrush your midtone colour over the lower lip's outer edges to blend it with the rest of the face. Next, run a highlight colour over the small convexity where the upper lip begins, and on the lower lip edges you just worked on.

BABY (OR VAMPIRE) SKIN



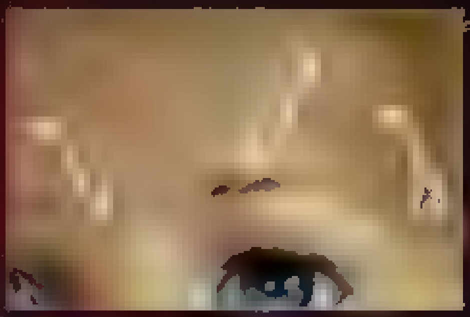


1 Not quite porcelain

Transparent complexion seems at first sight seems quite similar to the porcelain skin tone, but there are several differences that make it worth looking at separately. Aside from the rule of hue switching between shadows and midtones, the colour choices aren't as determined: they depend on the character you are painting. A baby palette would be natural looking – what you might describe as 'typical' skin tones – while a vampire palette is pale and sickly, in keeping with the creatures' legend.

2 Anatomy alert

A child's facial convexities are a bit different to an adult's, especially in the cheek area. Above, I've marked the convexity with the red line and the ways of shading with masks of blue (shadows) and white (highlights).



3 It's texturing time!

Enrich the nose and cheek with some pink. Then it's time to create the illusion of skin transparency by sketching in veins. The skin is thinnest on a child's forehead and, usually, just above the eyes. The older the child, the less visible the veins will be.

Pick a violet or bluish brush (a Hard Round or an Airbrush) and create a thin net of lines to simulate veins (1). Blur the layer slightly. Underline the veins' thickness with crimson: focus on the vein junctions (2), and add darker strokes now and then (3).

If you choose to paint a vampire, I find that intense, nearly black vein nets around the eyes and lips, fading gradually, give a convincingly undead appearance.

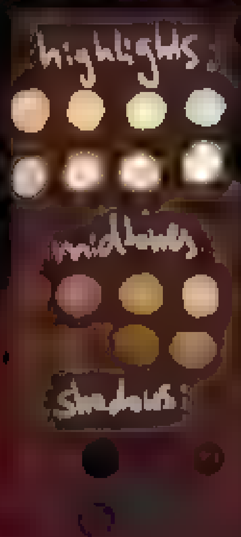
PRO SECRETS

4 No pores

For final skin texturing, I refrain from painting skin pores. If you paint a newborn, you can try to add a subtle rash, which is quite typical in little babies. Do so by placing various dots of reddish colour on top of each other; start with big blobs of high transparency, gradually moving on to smaller and more opaque. Concentrate especially on the cheek and chin area. You can also add a tiny spot highlight to the nose and lips – it's a small touch, but adds to the cuteness greatly!

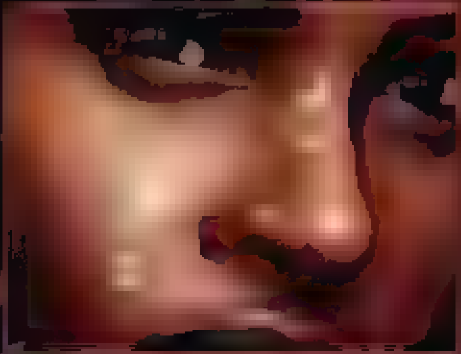
If you're painting a vampire, run over the edges of the face with a large Airbrush, it'll add to the unearthly glow of the sickly skin.

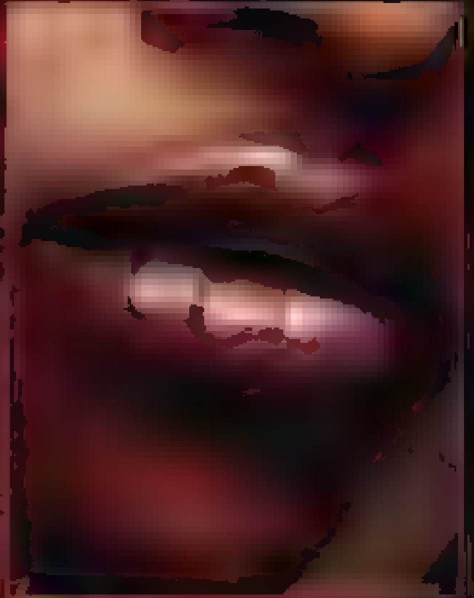
DARK SKIN



1 Anatomy issues

Colour choices for this complexion might be a bit hard to decide upon at first. Try making a palette by choosing typical midtones for a Caucasian complexion, then darkening them with Brightness/Contrast. The key to a realistic dark complexion, however, is anatomy and texturing. This is a bit of a generalisation, but the nose should usually be a bit stronger and wider, and the lips more puffy. Aside from the glow on the upper lip edge (1) mark a small shadow cast on the face by the lip's convex edge (2).





Typical blending

The logic of applying and blending colour for a dark complexion is pretty much the same as for a light one. Start off by picking some sets from the palette and blocking in the midtones and shadows with any tool of choice (except the Airbrush). You don't have to be as careful about the transitions as you do with a porcelain complexion, so avoid using any smudge or blur tools, and just smoothen the rough parts with the Blender in Painter or the Hard Round brush in Photoshop. You can also check the disc for the Spackled Skin Blending brush, which you may find useful here.

Paint the skin pores!

Oily skin pores are typical in this complexion. Start with a very light flesh colour, painting pores one by one with a Hard Round brush. Concentrate on the nose and cheek. It's important for the blobs to be very close and diagonal (1). Change the dots' opacity constantly, increasing it in highlighted areas. After this step, Photoshop users can do a little trick: create a new layer and place some nearly white short diagonal strokes over the desired area. Right-click the layer and choose Blending Options>Inner Shadow. Adjust the distance and size and pick a midtone as your colour (2).

Perfect lips

The basic shading of dark lips is quite typical. You can paint some small light dots with an Airbrush and dim them later with a bigger brush.

To underline the lips' size and convexity, add bigger vertical lines in a light colour and connect them with a series of dots.

PRO SECRETS

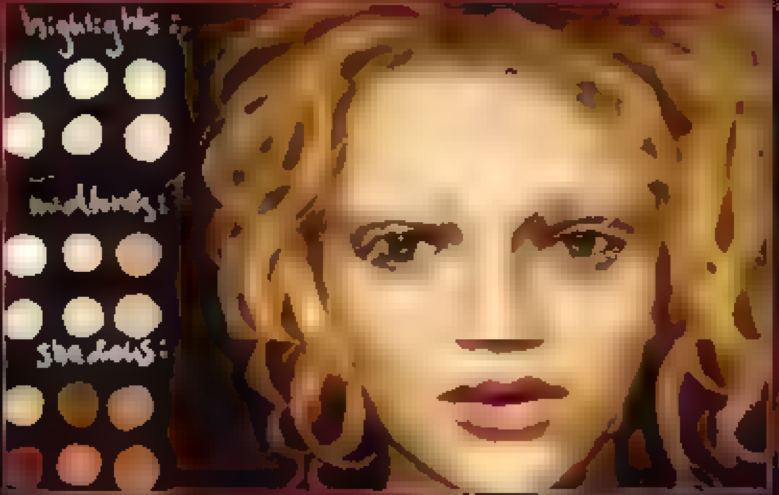
[illegible]

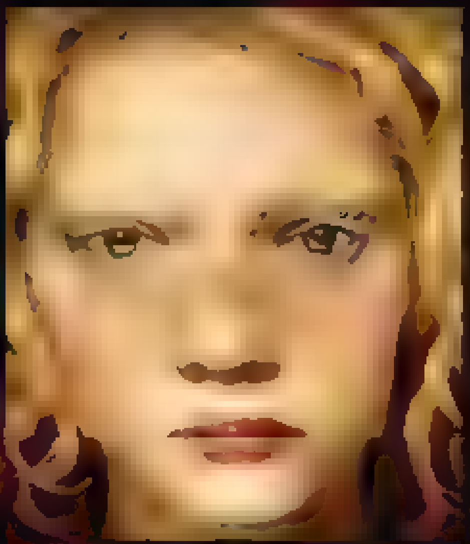
FAIR SKIN

Freedom of technique

I personally find the fair complexion on redheads to be one of the most interesting, yet it's rarely seen in digital art. To start off, pick any colours you like, as long as they're pale. I prefer orange tints because they go well with the hair. The colour application and brush choice is also standard.

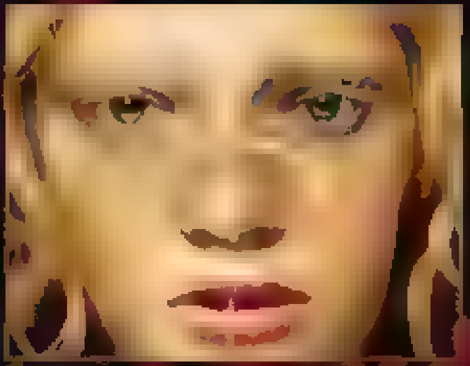
What makes this complexion so special, are some minor details that, while separately insignificant, combine to form a really great effect. To start, sketch out a basic face with any tool you feel comfortable using (except the Airbrush).





Contrasts

The face ought to be colourless. This means using absolutely no contrasts inside the face, which is done by choosing a mild yellow or light orange colour to paint the facial hair with. Eyebrows should be barely visible, so use a transparent Airbrush to block the hairs in. For eyelashes, paint delicate strokes of brown and, on top of them, highly opaque strokes of lighter colour. If the eyes need some definition due to the lack of a dark eyelash framing, you could try adding transparent blobs of darker colour at the base of the lashes.



Freckled cuteness

Freckles depend on your skin type. Temporary sun-derived freckles can be found on any type of Caucasian skin, while permanent freckles are characteristic of a pale complexion. For a freckle texture, create a low-opacity Speckled brush in Photoshop or a jittered Airbrush in Painter. Choose a colour slightly darker than your midtone, and paint it over the majority of the face. Gradually move on to more opaque, darker colours. At the end, paint in some freckles one by one for a natural look. If they don't blend well with the face, switch layer modes.

Extra colours

Once you're done with the freckles, there's not much you still have to do. If you feel the face turned out to be too colourless (which is quite often the case), try enriching it with shades by adding blushes or, if possible, adding some additional colours to the iris. ●

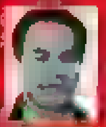
Photoshop

STEAMPUNK GEISHA

Hoang Nguyen explains how to create a simple composition, lay out an interesting background and define a light source

Artist **PROFILE**

Hoang Nguyen
COUNTRY: USA



Hoang Nguyen was born in Vietnam. Before his 10th birthday, he moved to the US, where he eventually landed a job with Dark Horse Comics. Subsequently pencilling for both DC and Marvel, Hoang now works for Electronic Arts. [illegible]

On the disc

Find workshop files showing various stages in the Striking folder inside Portraits

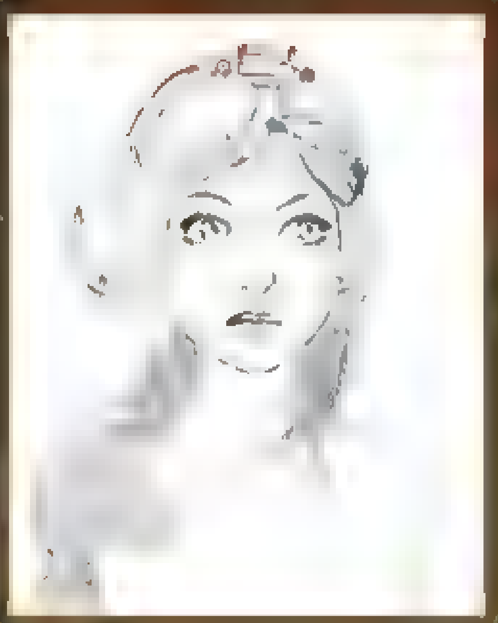
Basic composition is very important. Many artists put too much distracting detail in their paintings, so in this workshop I'll focus on how to direct viewers into the image and simplify the background, so it doesn't overwhelm the main theme. Then I'll explore how to create an interesting background to complement the subject. Lastly, I'll define where the light source is coming from, to tie all the elements together.

Whether your subject is a landscape, portrait or still life, it needs a central focal point. What is it you want to convey and what is it that you want to get across? You need to be able to capture a viewer's attention and keep them interested. In order to do that, you must produce what appeals to you the most. What moves you? How do you feel about the subject matter? Don't produce art just for the sake of art.

For this workshop, I'm creating an image that appeals to me – an image that incorporates something old and something modern; a sort of take on East meets West.

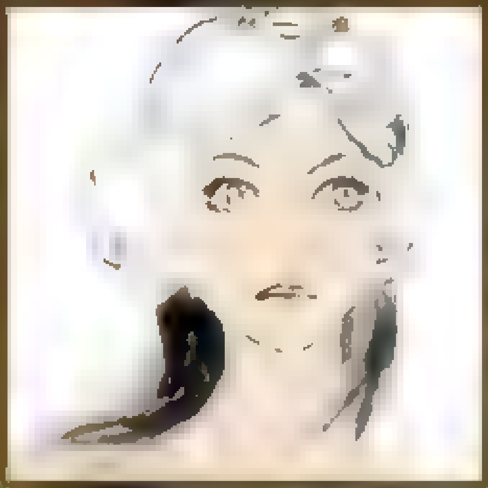
1 Composition

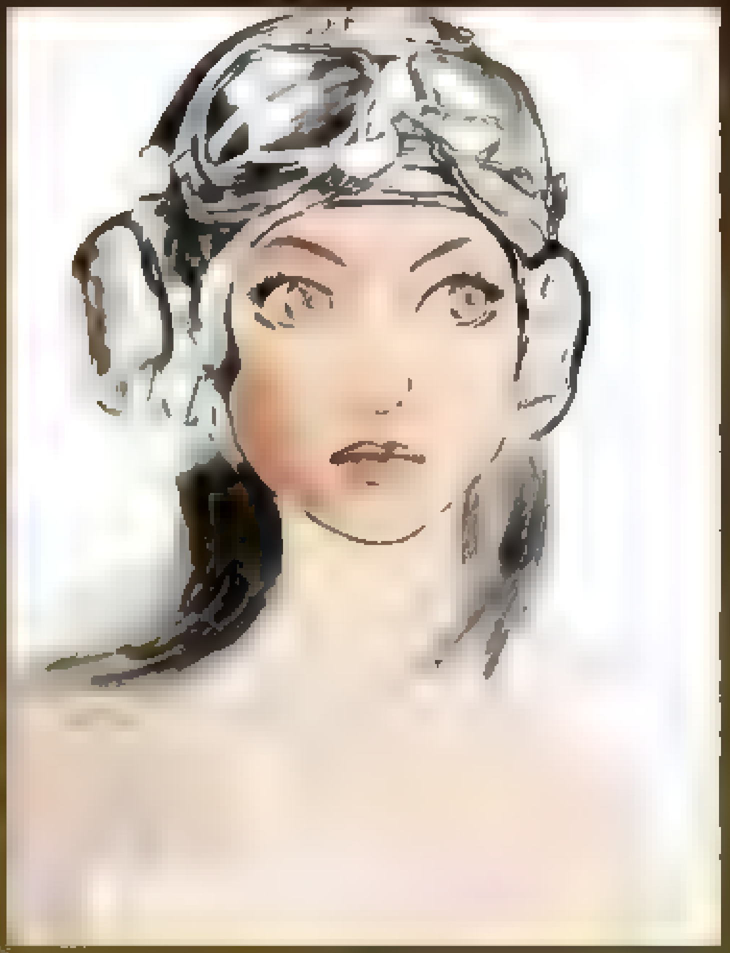
When laying out your art, keep it simple. Sometimes, as you start to paint, the painting dictates what you're going to do next. Often happy accidents can occur, sometimes for the best. I like to keep my composition simple and my centre on the image. You also want a viewer's eyes to go directly to the focal point. Once you've established that, you must focus your attention on the subject matter: everything else is just background. My main focus here is her eyes and face.

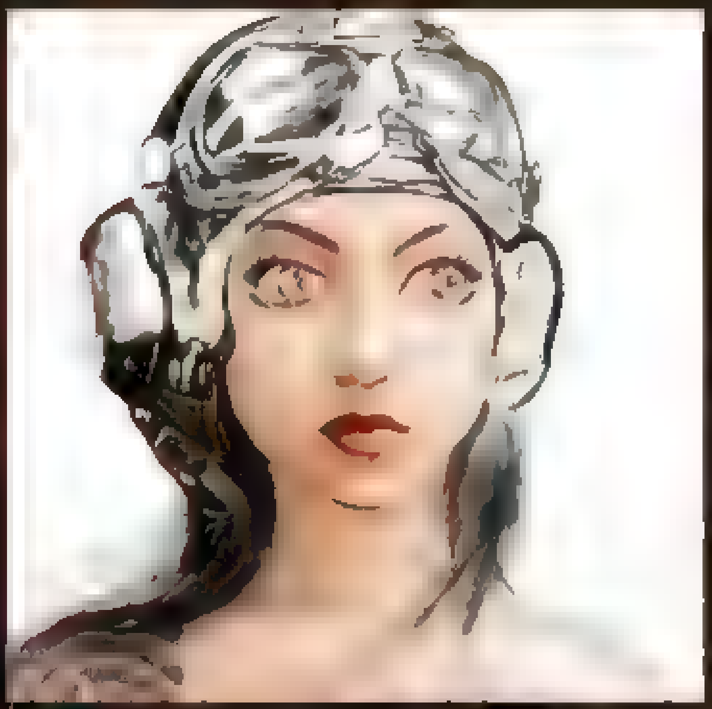


2 Blocking

I begin with a simple, flat colour. I usually like to paint in layers, so that if I'm not happy with how it turns out I can just delete it. Here, I play around with the hair, experimenting with various brush sizes and opacity.





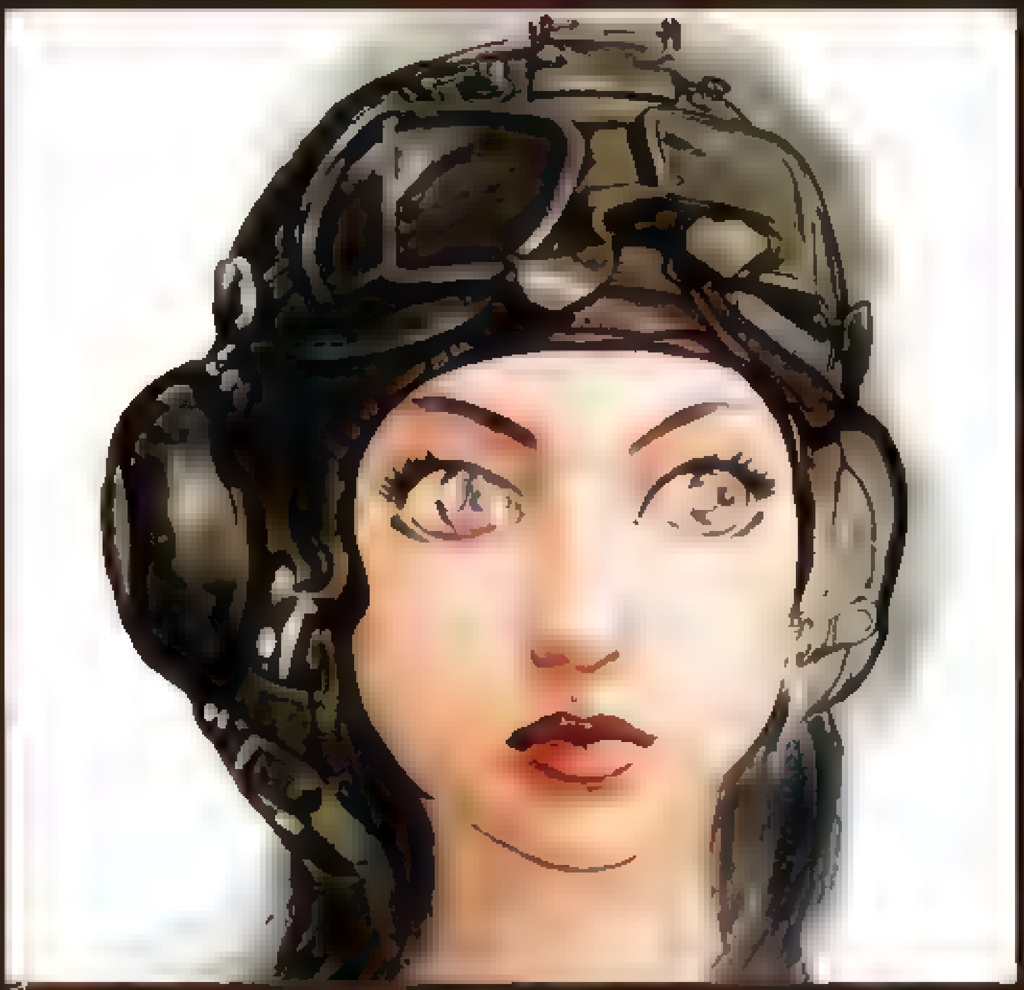


3 Hat and goggles

With the standard brush set at between 10 to 50 pixels, I play around with values and shadows, trying to define form around the goggles and the pilot hat. I detail in the headgear and play around with the face. I also start laying down some colour for the tattoo.

4 The skin

I start blocking in the skin colour and defining some shapes and form, especially around the tattoo. At this stage I keep everything fairly flat and simple. Then I paint in the headgear and add another layer of skin colour to blend the head and body. I'm beginning to think about where the light source is coming from, so I can give the form some light and shadow.

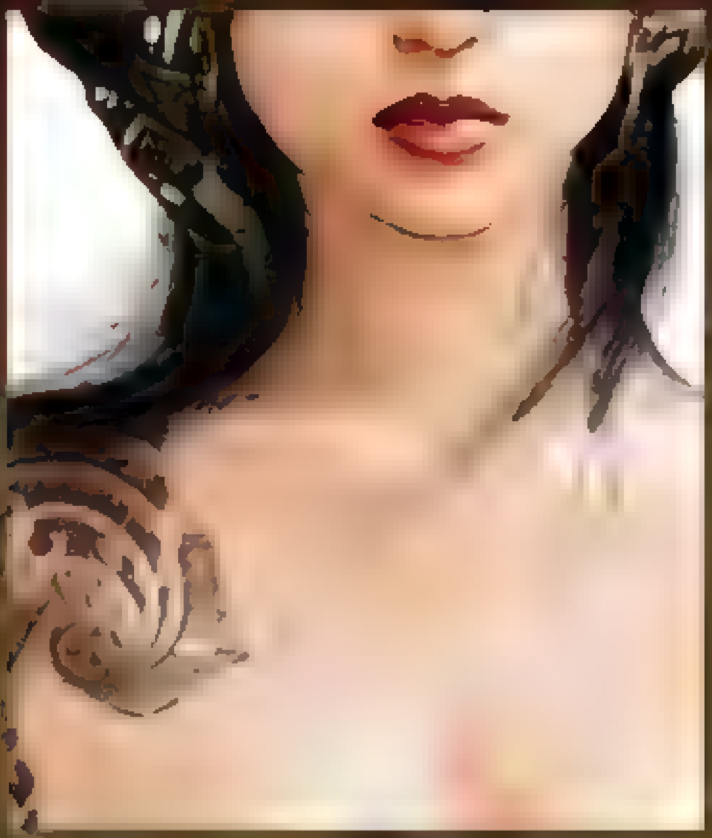


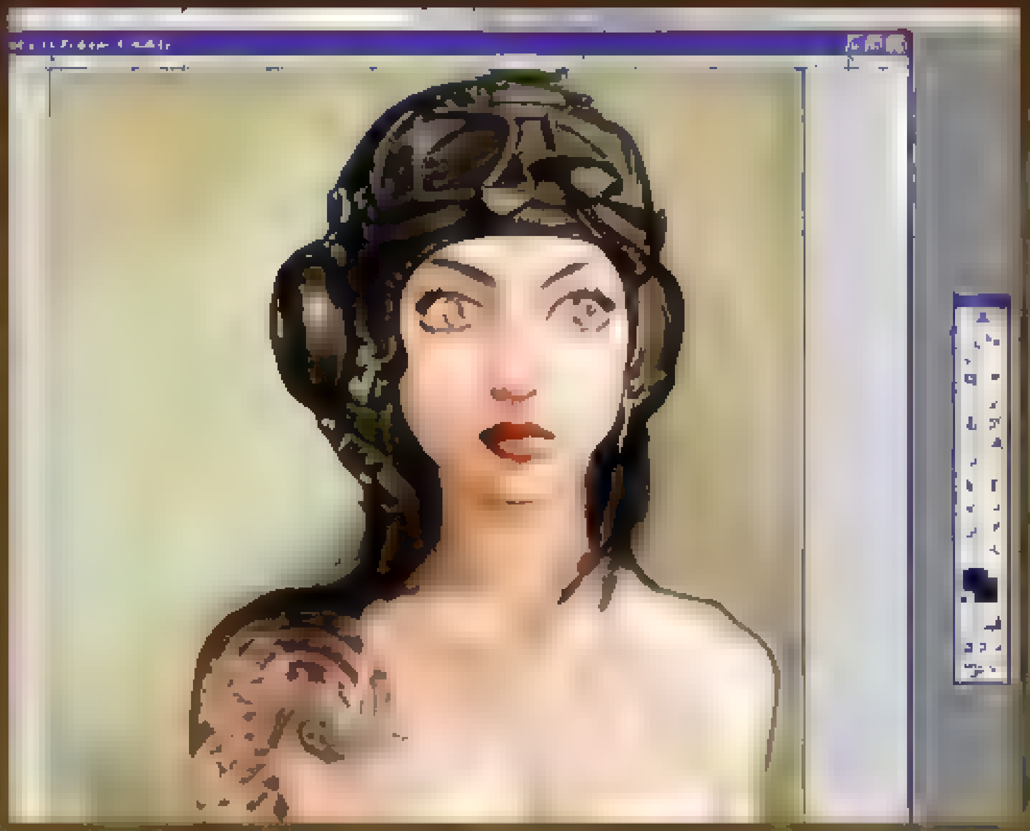
5 Let there be light

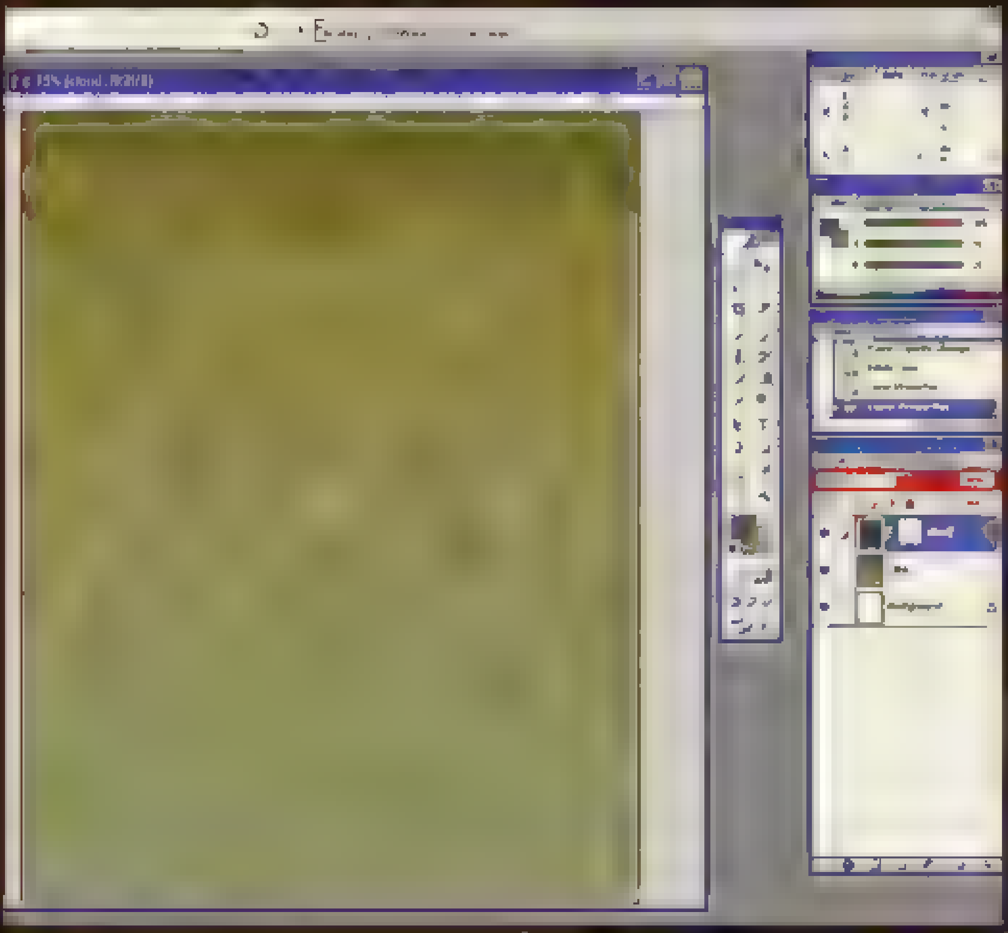
I put more detail into the headgear and start to focus a bit more on how the light bounces off the goggles. At this point, I've pretty much abandoned the face. I'll get back to it once I've laid out the background.

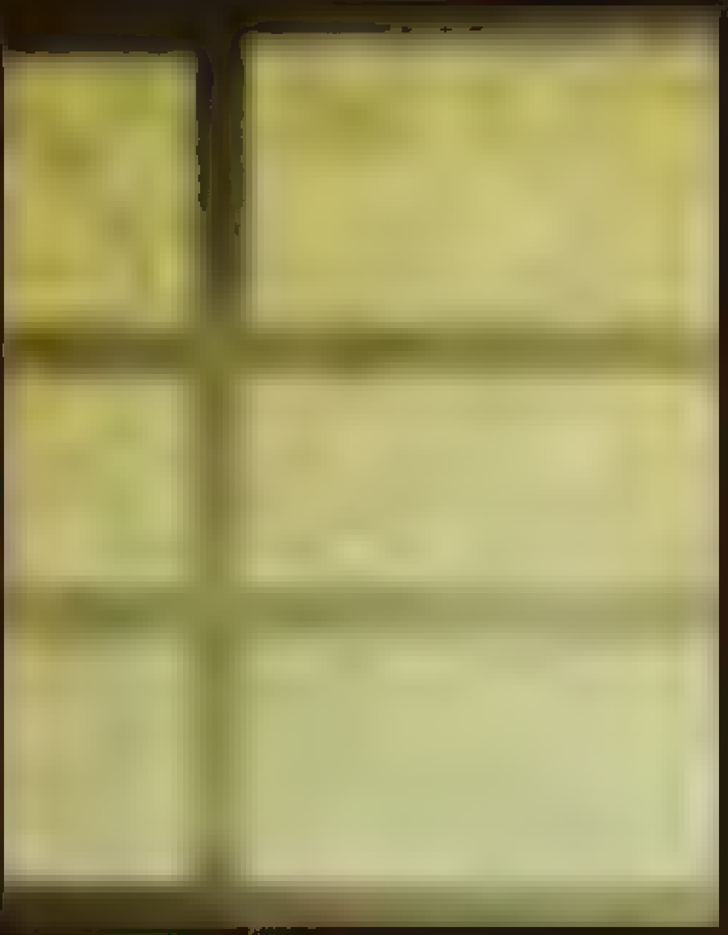
6 Blending colours

I block in some colour for the background, just to get a general feel of where I want to go with this. I use cool colour to offset her skin tone, but I stay within the colour palette I want; I usually prefer to keep the colour range to a minimum. The olive background goes well with her headgear and the brown colour blends nicely with her skin. It really helps to make her stand out and enhance her expression more. This will be the key to my image, so I'll be putting some extra love into it.









7 Background

For the background, I want to recreate a simple Japanese screen door with some writing and an old tree on it. I'm more concerned with big shapes and colour, rather than worrying about detail. I go for an olive colour background and keep it almost monochromatic. I start with a flat colour via Edit>Fill. With a standard brush set at 500 pixels, I do a gradation from dark to light using quick brush strokes.

8 Screen layers

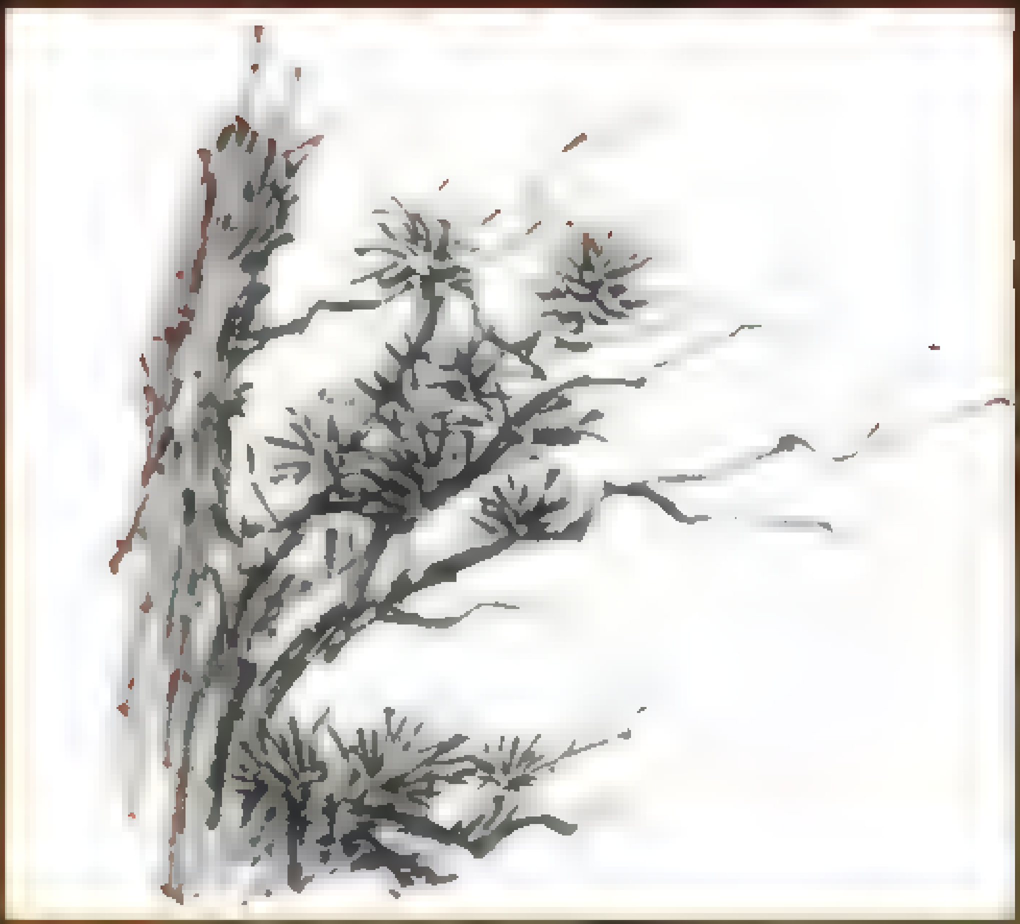
I copy the layer and set it to Screen, then select Filter>Render>Clouds. I set Opacity to 50 per cent, then mask the Cloud layer and fade out the bottom of the image. I keep the gradation dark at the top and light at the bottom.

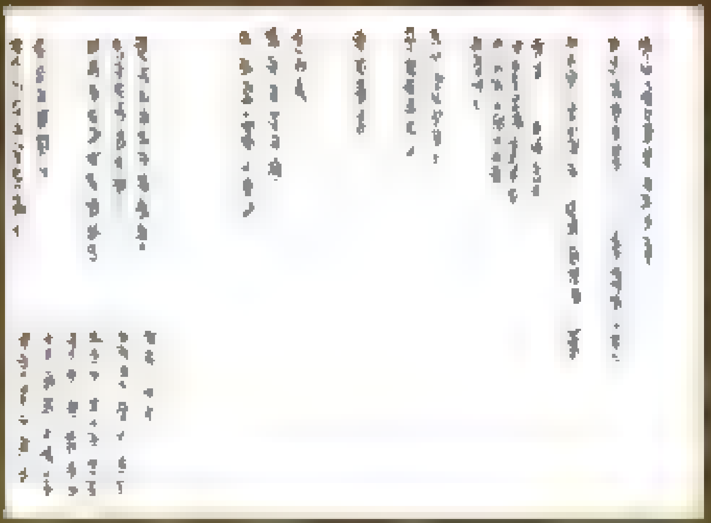
9 Screen door

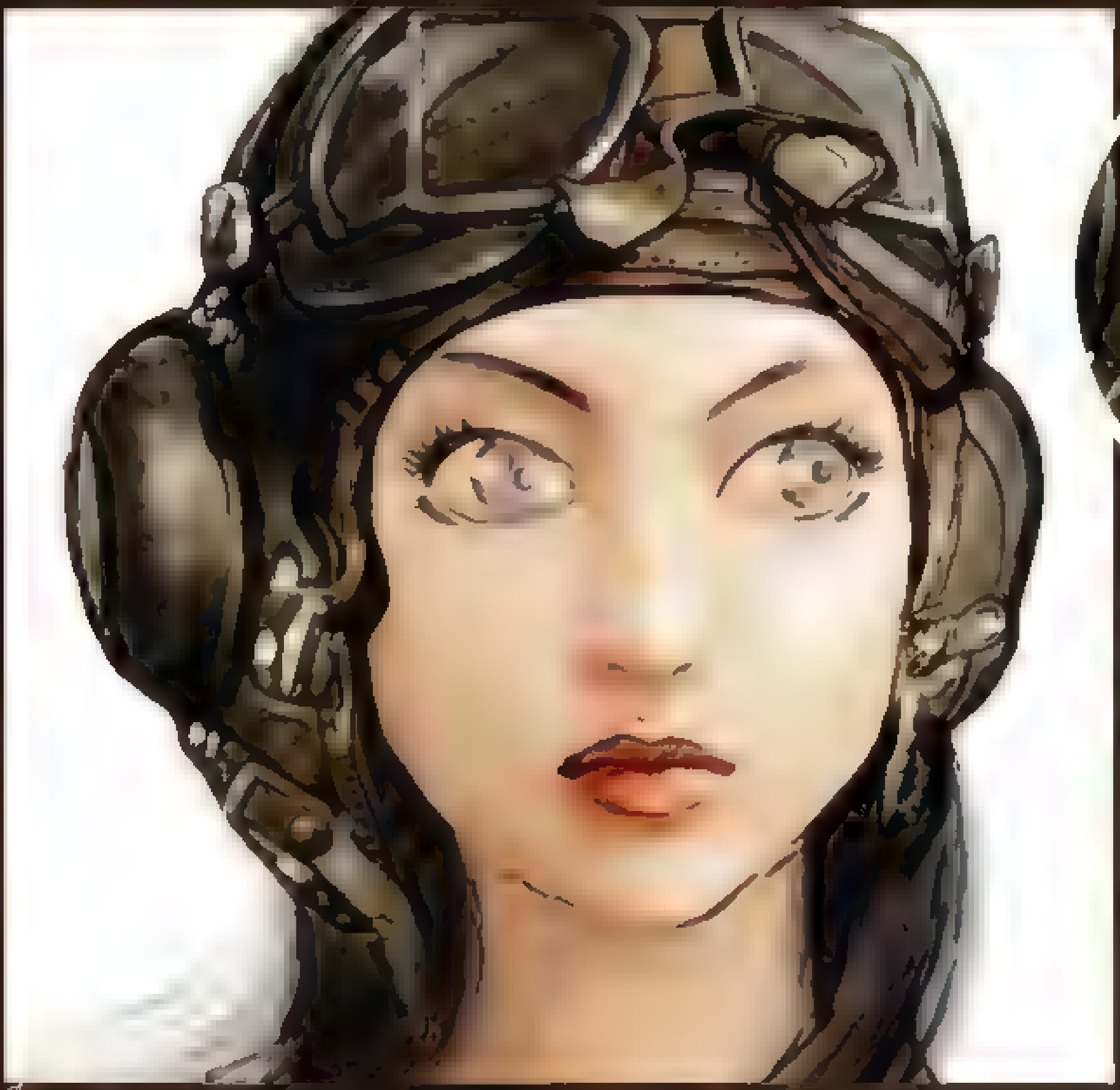
With the Marquee Tool, I mask out a grid and do a colour fill to produce a Japanese screen door design. At the moment, it's very simple and blocky. Next I do a Gaussian Blur and fade out the middle of the grid. Using the Gradient Tool, I fade from left to right, keeping it subtle and thinking about the light source coming from the right side.

10 Dry brushing

For the detailing, I use a dry brush technique, basically dipping a brush into an ink jar and drying it as much as possible, then painting with it on paper. I create two images: one is a dried-up tree, and the other a letter written in kanji (Chinese characters), done in a similar style to an old Japanese wood block painting. I scan the images in, do some adjustment, and off we go!







11 Face details

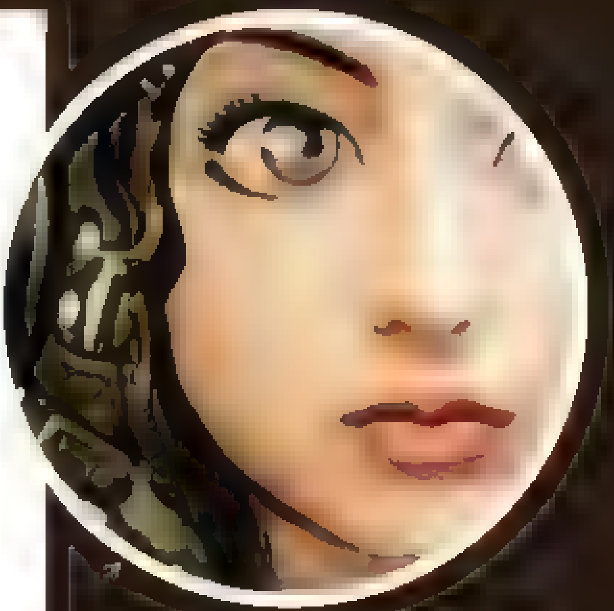
Now that I have the background and most of the elements in place, I'm going to focus on the face. I start to build up layers of skin tone and add various hues, mostly purples and blues, beneath the skin layer. This process is important in building up realistic skin shades; it gives the face more depth and form.

As light bounces off the face, certain regions will be lighter than others, especially under the eyes and around her eyelids. I also start to erase and soften the pencil underneath her lips. I'll add highlights and details later, but right now I'm more concerned with getting the shapes and forms right.

12 All in the eyes

Eyes hold such emotion: you can tell if someone is laughing or crying by looking into them – even if you can't see the rest of the face. They're always an important element in all my paintings; they enable me to capture a certain look that I strive to achieve.

To bring out the feeling in her eyes, I start detailing around the iris and her eyelashes. Using just the regular brush and sizes between 4 to 10 pixels, I focus more on her mascara and highlights. I also add detail to her eyebrows and define them more, keeping them trim and sharp.



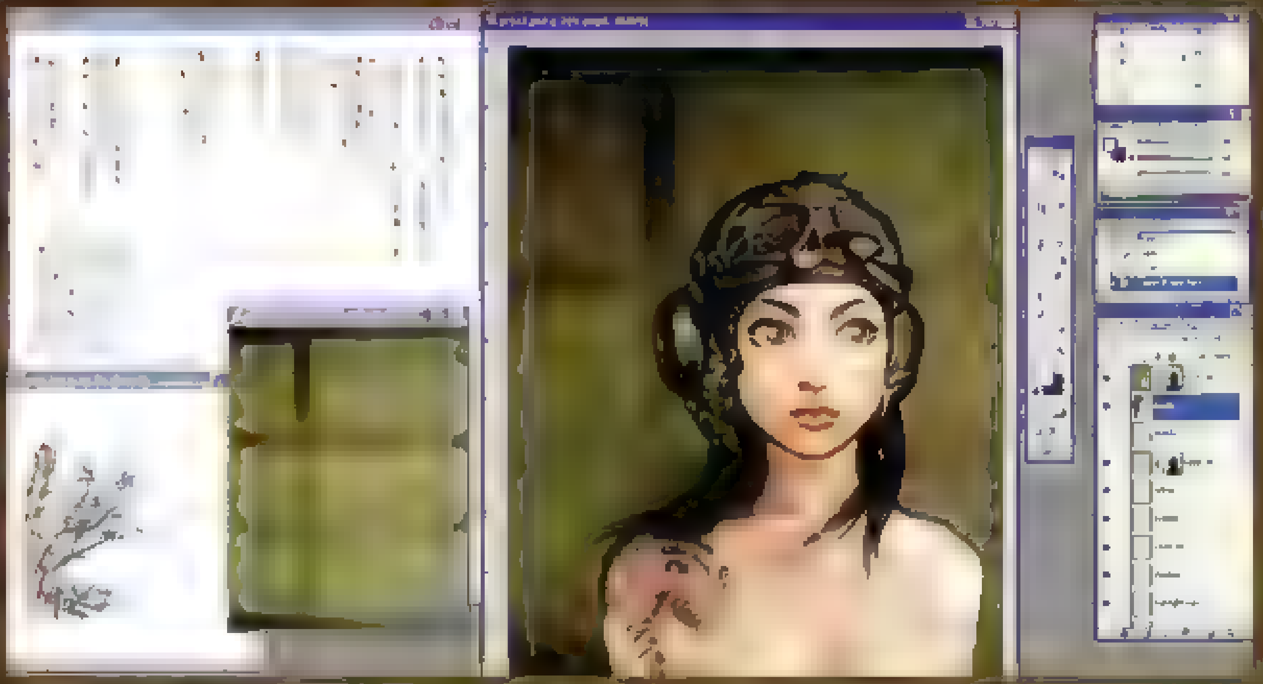
13 Moles

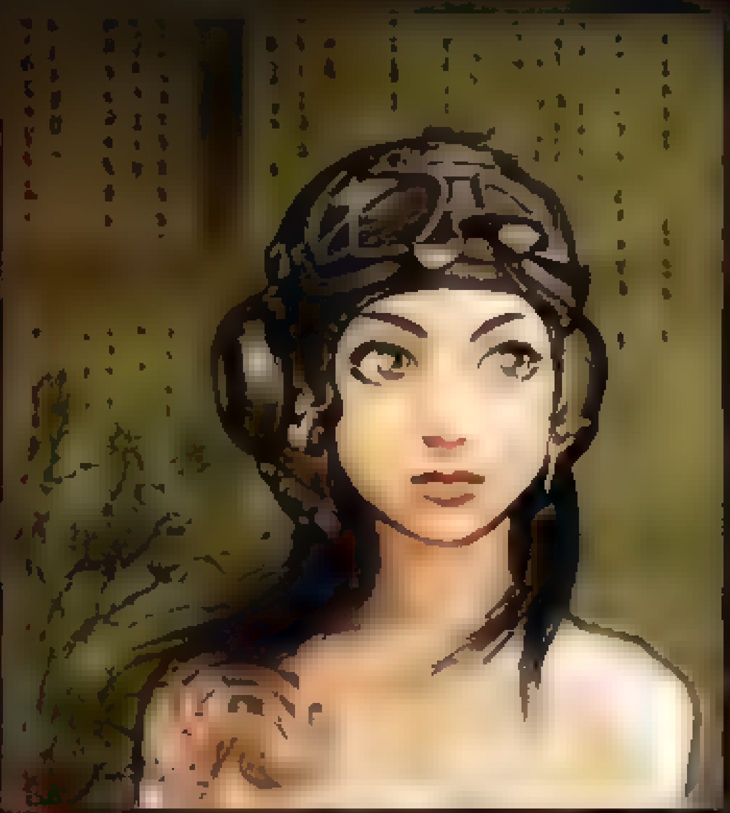
Next, I paint in some birthmarks and moles to make the skin more realistic. Our faces are made up of lots of pores, and these flaws help define who we are. Cindy Crawford comes to mind as someone whose "imperfections" add to her allure.

On a new Multiply layer, I apply more make-up around her eyes. Using a muted olive green, I apply a thin layer over and around her eyelids. I also soften the area around the eyes to reduce the intensity of her look. I'm pretty happy with her face at this point, so I call it quits for now. I'll add more details, such as light and shadows, once I'm near the end.

14 Combine elements

At this stage, I'm ready to combine various elements and begin to finalise the painting. I drop in the background and mask it around the figure. I also copy and [illegible]





15 Add the kanji

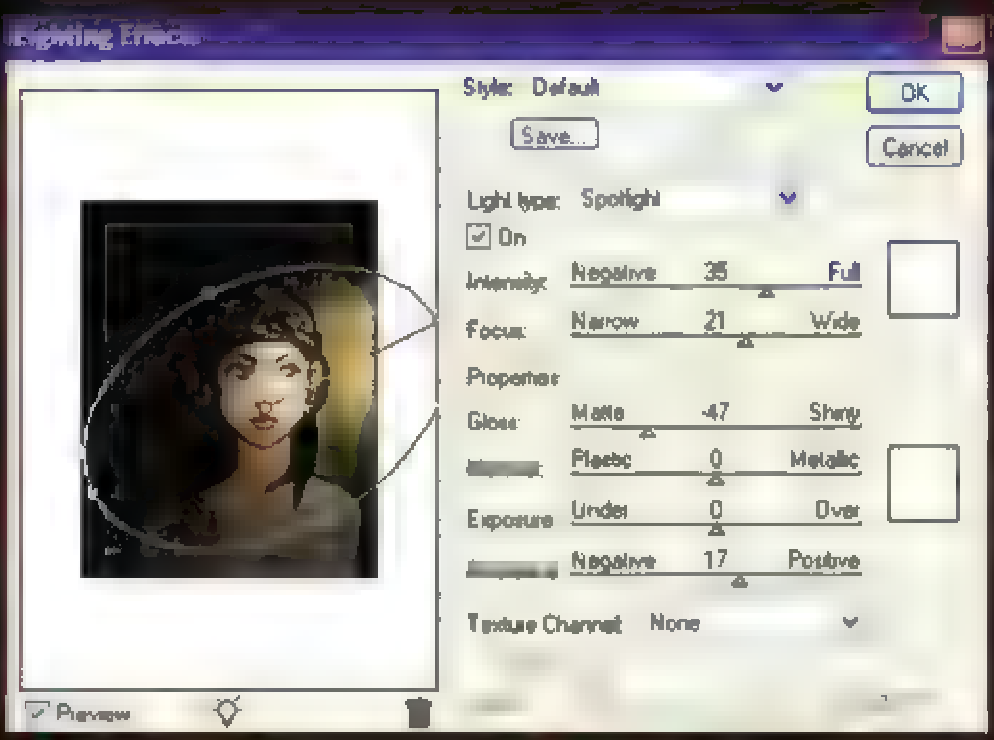
The kanji and the tree are added on a Multiply layer with Opacity set to 80 per cent. I then paint in the light source and try to soften her look a bit. I'm getting close to finishing the painting. I just need to combine the foreground and background together; right now it looks like she's floating over the background.

16 Light adjustments

To fix the "floating" issue, I flatten the image and make a duplicate onto a new layer. I select Filter>Render>Lighting Effects, which brings up a dialog box. I use a spotlight and adjust the light fall-off. After playing around with various settings, I click OK. Next, I create a mask and adjust the shadow and light intensity; now the background and foreground blend rather nicely.

There are lots of ways you can achieve this effect – you can paint in the shadow using Multiply layers or you can use the Dodge Tool, for example. I prefer the latter technique, since it's fast and you can keep adjusting the settings until you're satisfied.

At this stage, I'm close to finishing the painting – I just need to go in and add the final details.



Style: Default

Light type: Spotlight

☑ On

Intensity: Negative 35 Full

Focus: Narrow 21 Wide

Properties

Gloss: Matte -47 Shiny

Plastic 0 Metallic

Exposure: Under 0 Over

Negative 17 Positive

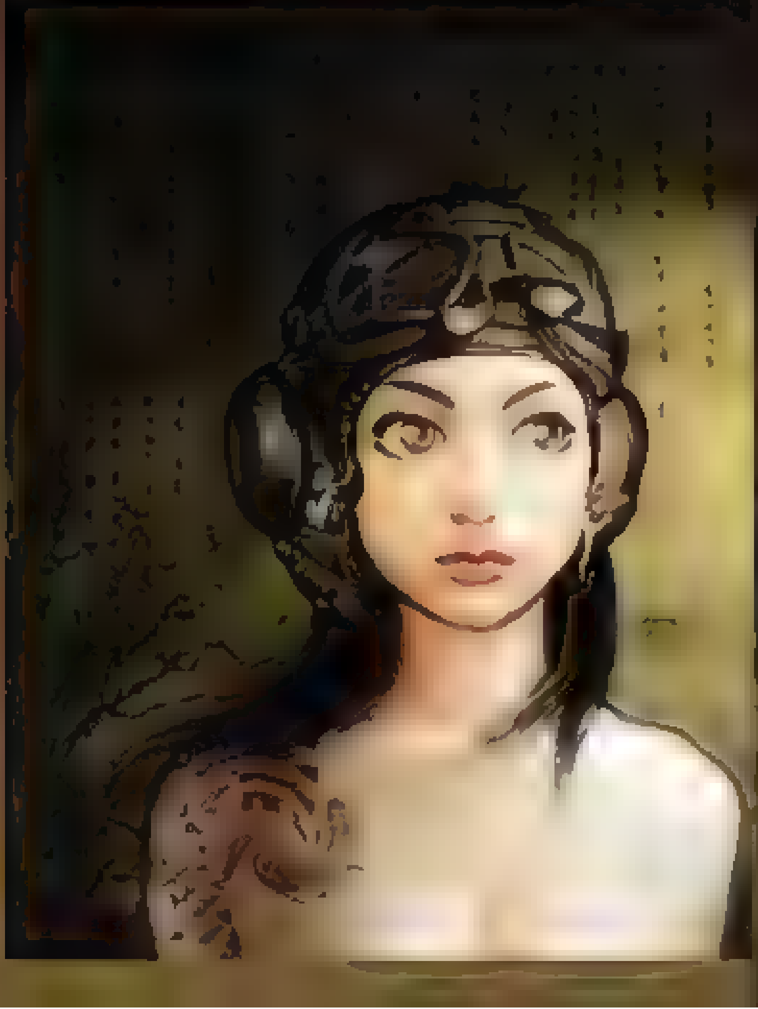
Texture Channel: None

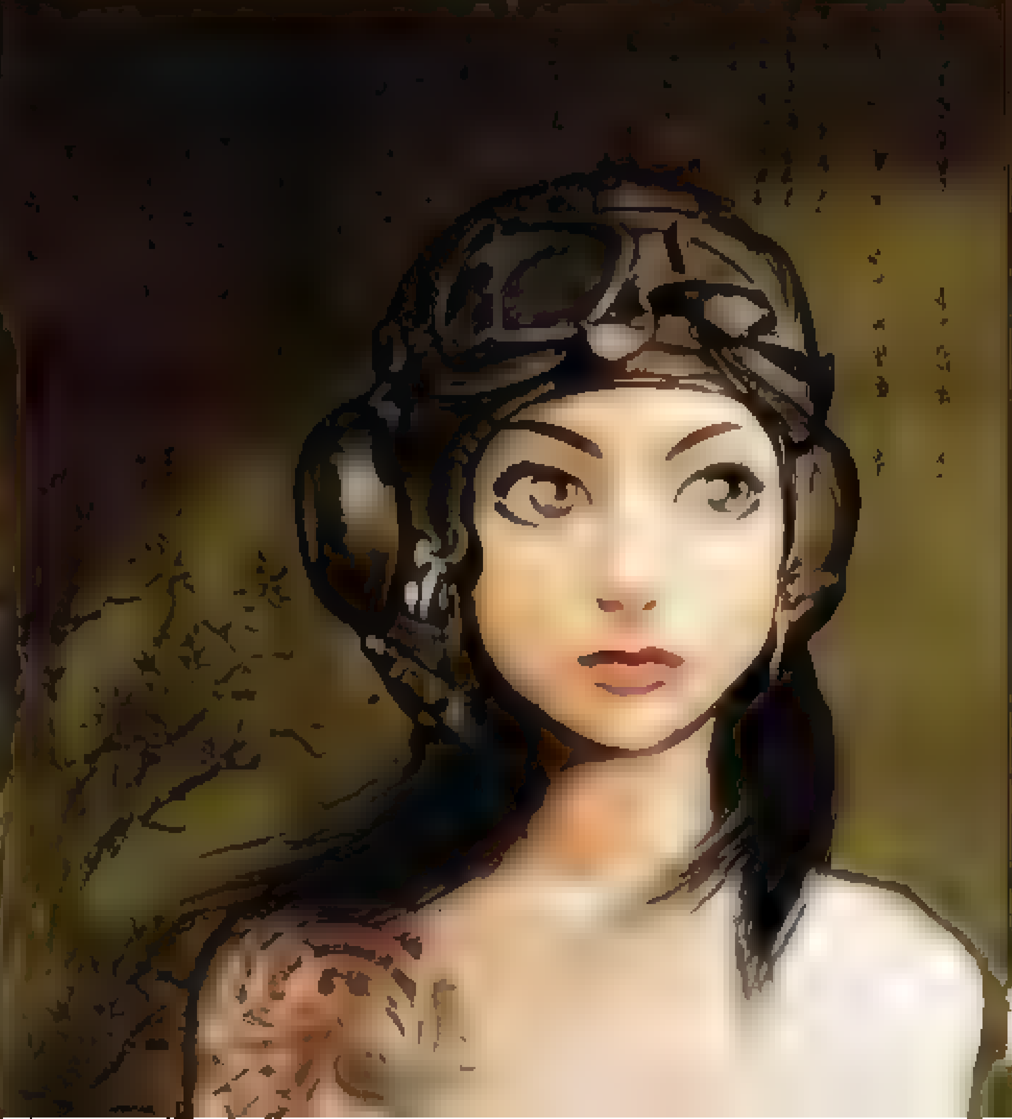
☑ Preview

17 Final adjustments

After printing out the image, I realise the background is too muddy, and the whole picture looks out of focus. The light effect doesn't work for me; the fall-off is what's causing the blurring. So back to basics.

I paint a shadow on a Multiply layer, with Opacity set to 85 per cent. I also go back and bring the text back into focus. I then overlay the whole image with a rice-paper pattern. You can get these papers at any art and craft store. The texture gives the image more depth and helps to weather the look a bit.





Artist PROFILE

Jason Chan

COUNTRY: US

Jason's passion for drawing led him to study illustration and conceptual design. Since then, Jason has freelanced on RPGs, card games and video games. www.jasonchanart.com

On the disc

[illegible] workshop file [illegible] folder inside Portraits

Painter & Photoshop

BLACK WIDOW

Learn to create a dangerous gothic beauty from start to finish in Painter and Photoshop, with **Jason Chan**

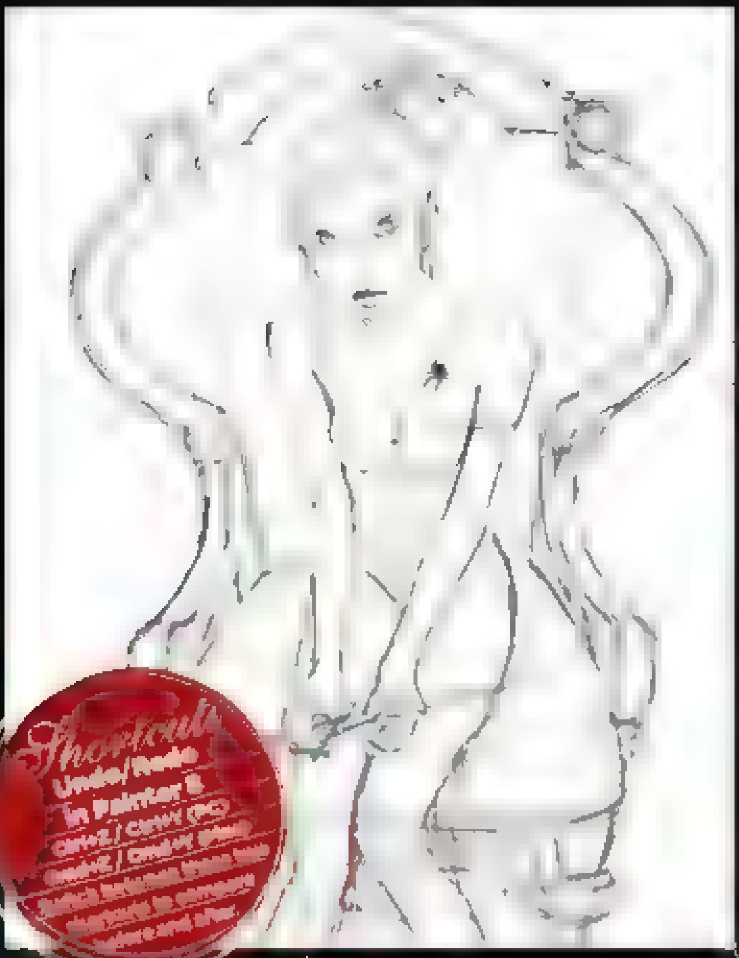
Life is made interesting by the existence of contrasts. Good exists because there is evil, and happiness is enjoyable because there is despair. The same rule applies to art: painting a beautiful woman is fine, but to make her look more beautiful, you need to balance her alongside something terrible.

In this image, I have painted an beautiful, innocent-looking girl in a dark and tainted situation. I'm using gothic imagery and heavy shading to conjure up an unsettling feeling in the viewer, thus playing innocence and sin against each other.

I often change my process to fit both my mood and the image. I think a flexible process keeps things intuitive and fresh, which makes it fun. Always try to have fun while working on your image, no matter how much you might hate it after having worked on it for hours. It shows when you love or hate your art. Try to work while you're in a good mood; this will affect your work.

This workshop follows my steps in creating this specific image. I firmly believe the computer is simply a tool, and you can paint no better with it than you could learn to paint with any other medium. I was initially taught to paint with oils, but I have worked in acrylics and watercolour, and have drawn illustrations throughout my life. This is what counts when making an image.

Your artwork is the culmination of all your years of study and hard work. With each new piece, you hopefully come up against new challenges and grow as an artist. Practice, in whatever form you prefer, can only make you better.



Shortcut

Undo/Redo in Painter X

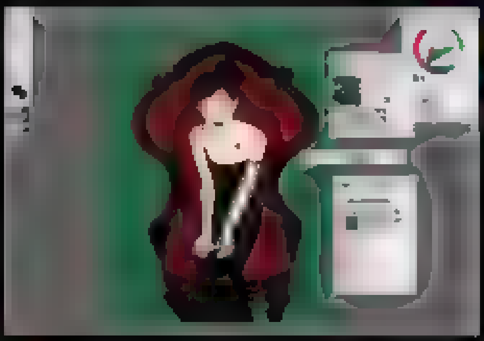
Ctrl+Z / Ctrl+Y (PC)

Cmd+Z / Cmd+Y (Mac)

[illegible]

1 Sketch

It's important to know what you are going to paint ahead of time, so thumbnails, sketches and studies are always a good starting point for projects. Some people spend more time preparing for a painting than actually painting it, which is not a bad thing. The more you plan ahead, the less you have to work when actually painting.

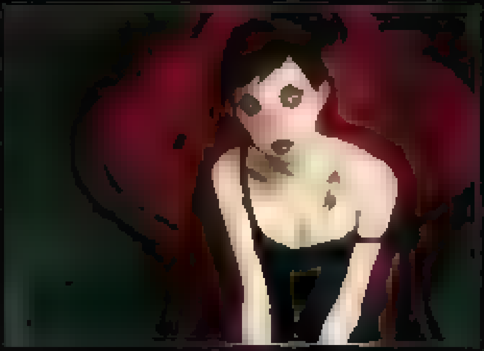


2 Base colour

Once my sketch is ready to go, I create a new layer for laying down a base wash of colour. I'm using Painter for this step. I select the Coarse Mop brush. This gives me large strokes that also show paper texture. You can choose a paper from your Paper Texture palette. I lay down simple washes of colour on a new layer to give myself an idea of what I want the colour scheme to be. You can also do this step in Photoshop using a Multiply layer and any brush you like.

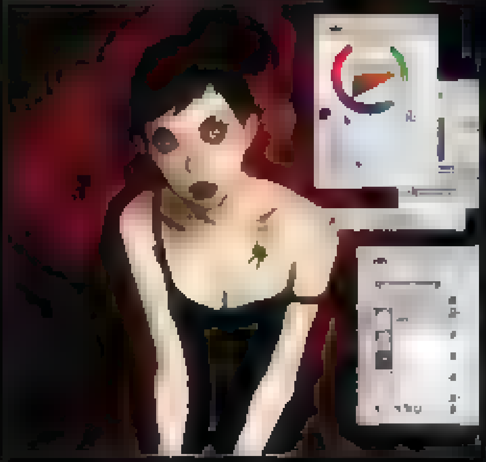
3 Shadows

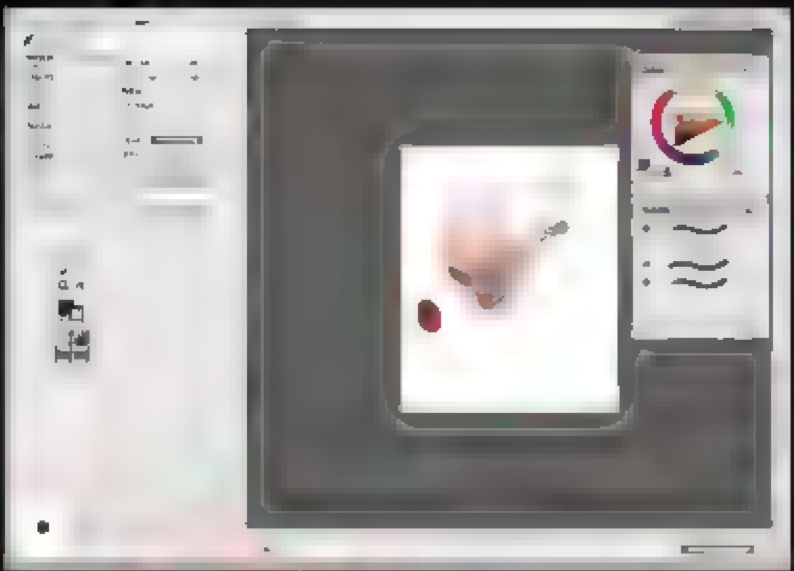
Now I create another layer for laying down basic shadows. I go with warm shadows because I plan on using a cool light source later on. Light works in contrasts – cool lights/warm shadows or warm lights/cool shadows. Lights and shadows are actually opposite colours, but we don't necessarily have to adhere to this rule. I use light peach for all the shadows. The reason I do the shadows on this layer is so that the difference between light and shadow is the same on every surface without having to guess what colour to use.



4 Temperature changes

With watercolour washes, I usually do one more layer for temperature changes: for example, I put light washes of green into the warm colours and warms into the greens. This helps to unify the image. Make sure you pay attention to how colours interact. For example, the girl's shoulders are surrounded by the red chair, so light will bounce off the chair, casting red light on her shoulders.





PRO SECRETS

Multiple saves

Be sure to save often, and save multiple versions. Sometimes your computer can crash while saving, which can destroy the file, or the file itself can become corrupted. A less tragic problem is when you do something you can't undo and you want to go back to a previous state. Always take precautions and [illegible] a lot. [illegible] it and you can always delete the extra saves in the future.

5 Circular oil brush

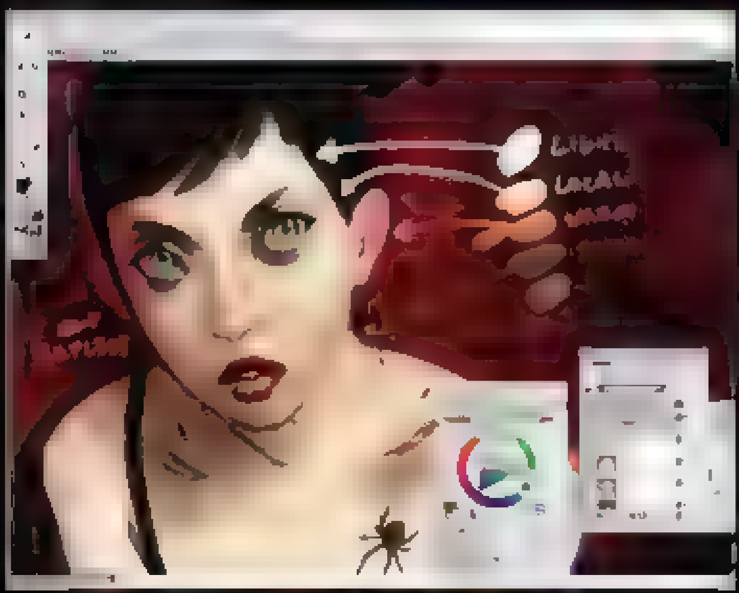
Create a brush for opaque painting by modifying the Oils Round Camel Hair. With the Camel Hair brush selected, go into the Brush Creator to change settings. Make sure Dab Type is Circular, Opacity is under Pressure control and Size control is Off.

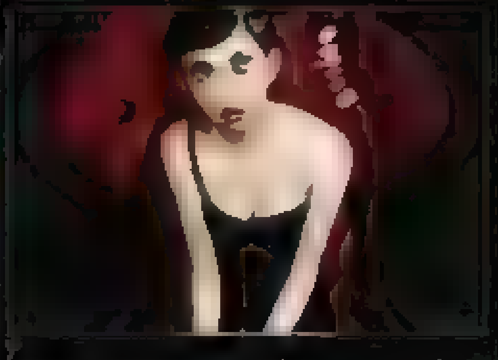
6 Skin palette

Skin is difficult to paint, because it's translucent and often misunderstood. Use a simple colour palette, and choose a pale blue light source to provide variety – it also adds a cold and mysterious feeling to the skin.

Painting this is simpler than it looks. First, create a new layer. Start with the local colour, and paint most of the face. Next, add in the shadow shapes with the shadow colour. Using the brush you created, blend between the shadow colour and base colour to create a variety of shades. Next, add in the warms for nose, ears and cheeks.

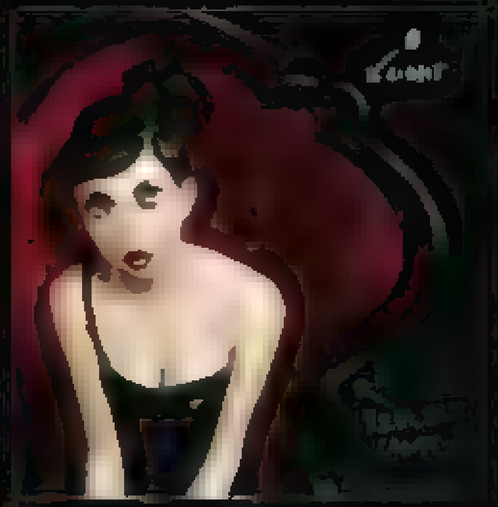
Finally, take a light colour and gently add that, keeping one spot of the head brighter than the rest. This will give a sense of the entire head as a shape. Be careful that you never mix your light and shadow colours together, and keep the lighting consistent. You can also add reflect lights into your shadows, which add form to shadow areas. They are darker than the light source, but never darker than the shadow. Never add lights, including reflect lights, that are darker than the local colour. Light sources only make things brighter, so a red light on white skin will not make white red.





7 Opaque base

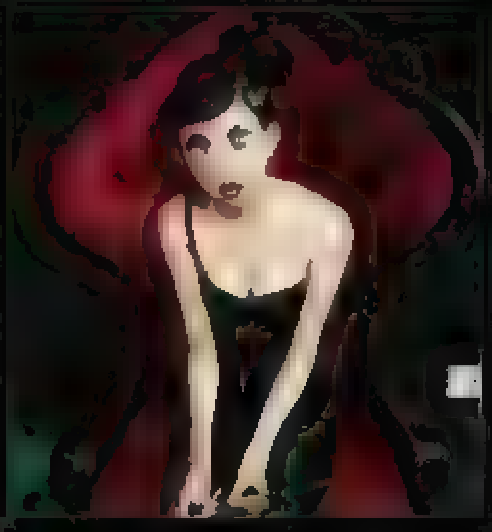
I continue using this method to paint the entire body and dress in opaque colour, covering the underpainting and outlines. If you are having trouble with any of your lighting, anatomy, forms or pose, don't be afraid to model it in a mirror, take a photo or have a friend model for you. Try to avoid copying directly from the photo, but use the forms and observations to make your own work look better. Don't be a slave to reference materials. They are tools for understanding, not for copying.



8 Surface variety

Create another layer and start painting the chair opaquely. Notice how I've tried to mimic the look of finished wood. I have strong highlights (again in light blue for consistency), and stronger reflected lights.

It's good to know what material different objects are made of when lighting them. The wood on the chair behaves differently from the cushioning, for instance. The cushioning is softer and doesn't have bright highlights. The dagger in her hands, on the other hand, is reflective and very shiny. All of these are different from her skin, which is soft and glossy. Her dress is less shiny than her skin, but not as soft as the chair cushion.



9 Chair clean-up

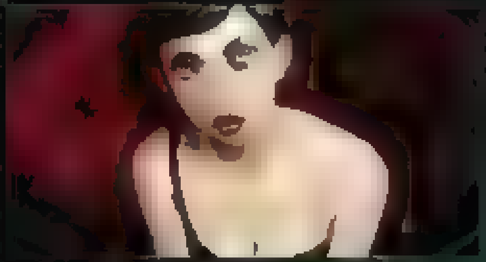
Go back over the chair to define its edges more clearly. I don't render my work in a super-photorealistic way, as you can see, so there are still some loose brushstrokes in there. If you like, you can keep on painting until it looks real. I'm still using my custom brush.

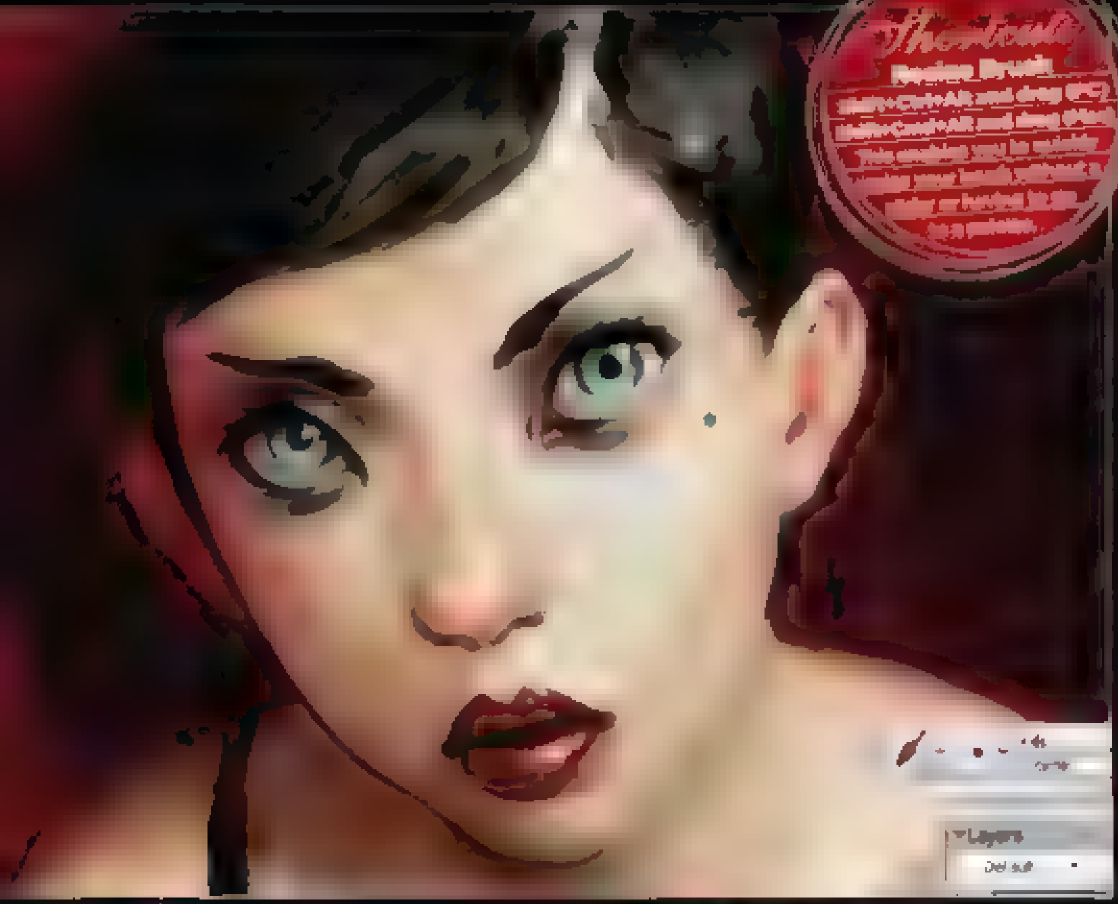
10 Chair pattern

Add a suggestion of pattern to the chair. To do this, create a new layer for the pattern. The layer should be turned to Multiply to apply the pattern to the chair. Note that you can only darken the chair on a Multiply layer. If you want to add lighter areas, you will have to go back and lighten your chair or paint on a new layer, later. You can spend your time and make a really nice pattern, but I'm just going to do a quick pattern for demonstration purposes. This is what the pattern looks like with the layer turned to Normal. Pretty ugly, right?

11 Chair pattern multiply

Now, turn the layer that the pattern was on back to Multiply. Make numerous tweaks to this until you're happy with it. You can easily change the pattern later if you like.





Shortcuts
Resize Brush
Shift+Ctrl+Alt and drag (PC)
Shift+Cmd+Alt and drag (Mac)
This enables you to quickly resize your brush without a slider or having to go to a palette.

12 The face

Go back through the image to clean things up some more. Start with the face. I'll talk a little about her face in general. I wanted her to be innocent, yet scary. This is a normal convention of mine. I do this with large eyes and small lips. I also use almost child-like head proportions, and tend to space the eyes widely and make them wide open.

I don't normally paint a stereotypical beautiful face; I like to change it and make it mine. Find out how you like to paint your faces, and it will give your work a unique flavour. I suppose mine are almost manga-like.

13 Clean up

This is a good point for cleaning up her body. I'm not aiming for a tight finish, but nothing too loose either. You can get a very smooth effect easily in Painter by using the Blender brushes. I like the Just Add Water tool. I don't use it so much in this image, but it's good for when I want a smooth finish.

14 Hands

Hands are hard to illustrate. Each one of them is just as complicated as drawing the rest of the human body. I highly recommend getting reference for hands. It's not hard to find: it's at the end of your wrists.

15 Hair

Hair can also be tricky. Painting strands can become too busy very quickly, and they don't always look good. I paint hair in masses. First, I put down the darkest colour of the hair over the whole shape. Then I layer lighter shapes on top. Finally, I add a few loose strands for detail.

16 Black widow

I decided early on that I wanted a black widow spider in this image. Let's make it sexy, scary and disgusting all at once by making it crawl up her chest. Remember, creating something scary or disgusting can make your beautiful elements more beautiful in contrast.

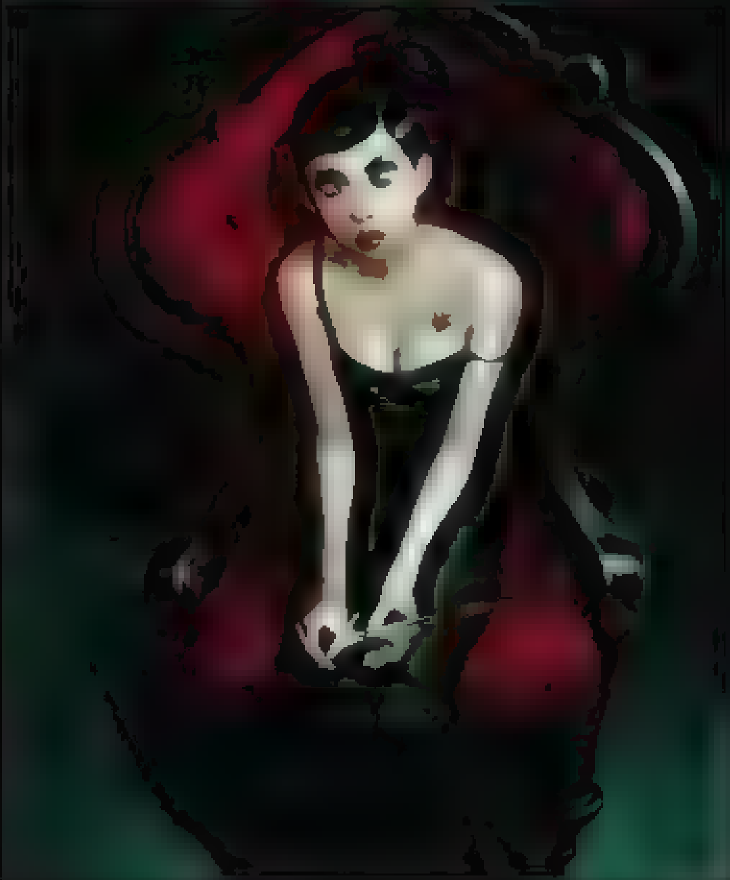
17 Tinting

It's going well, but the image should be colder and less friendly. I create a new layer and bring out the digital watercolours again. I put washes of blues and greens over the image, which gives everything a cold tint. The mood looks better, but it's getting a little too dark.

18 Finishing the image

To bring out the highlights a little more, I take the image into Photoshop. I create a new layer and set it to Color Dodge. This layer enables you to paint in lights. I use fairly low-value, cool colours.

I'm fairly loose, and let strokes bleed out beyond the highlights to create auras of light. After affecting different areas with lights, the image is complete.



PRO SECRETS

Keep layers to a minimum

Layers are great, but they're not essential. I sometimes do entire paintings sometimes on just two layers. It can be liberating, and feel more like working with real paint. Simply paint on a layer, then drop it to the canvas when you like it. Then, when you paint something new, create a new layer and drop it when you're done.

Painter & Photoshop

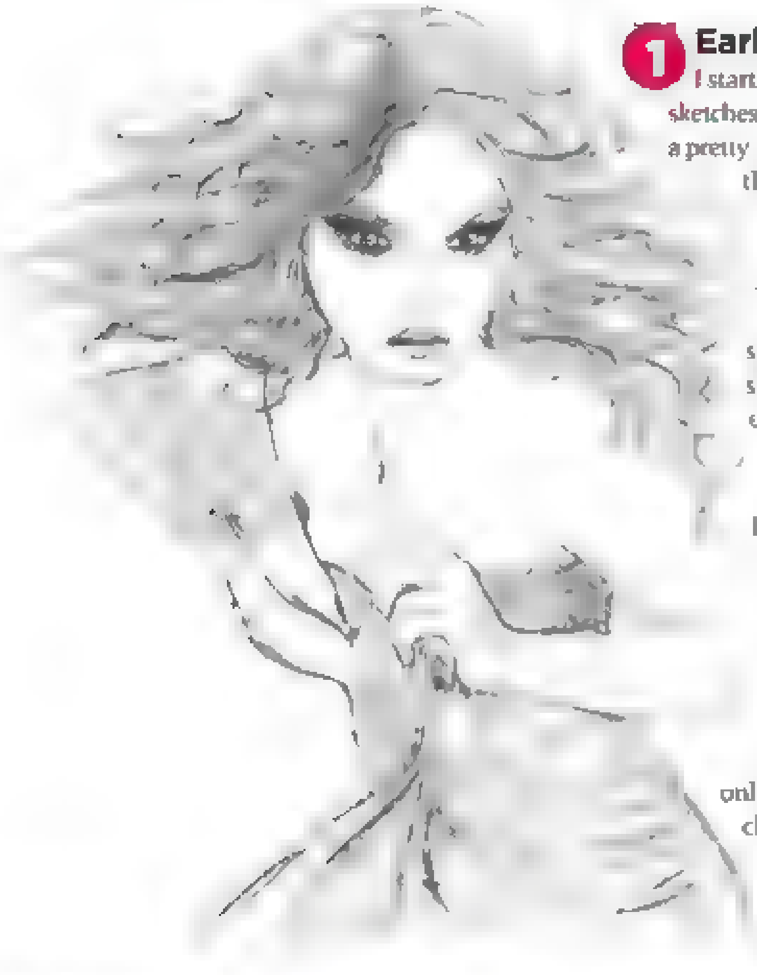
I PUT A SPELL ON YOU

Portrait specialist **Katarina Sokolova** shows you how she creates her stunning images, which place exotic women within dark fairy tales...

Female portraits are by far my favourite topic. I like to give each character I create a distinct image, personality and character that is specific only to that person. I paint unbelievably beautiful, strange and often exotic women. A plain image of a beautiful woman is good, but to make her even more beautiful you need to add a personal story to the painting. It may be simple and clear to the viewer from the first glance, or otherwise very complicated, but it has to be there. I prefer mysterious stories filled with a mystical atmosphere, in which beautiful women keep their great or shocking secrets.

For this painting, I first wanted to create a druid character, an evil forest fairy who lures you into her dangerous embrace. I planned to paint her in the forest in a dynamic pose, to convey a feeling of danger and the irresistible attraction of a beautiful fairy who brings death. At the same time, I wanted to make the painting very fresh and airy. As you will see, however, my vision changes. I transform the forest druid into a fairy of the underground, a magical oracle, a fortune-teller.

I use a simple background to emphasise details of the character. I move the action to a dark cellar and use saturated gothic colours and mystical images to invoke a disturbing feeling. Here is a riddle of life and death, contained in a crystal flask, a choice that depends on the will of a fortune-teller. She keeps the secret of the elixir of death and can change fate.



1 Early sketches

I start my work with several sketches of a figure. I plan to paint a pretty hard, dynamic pose, and therefore I use photo references. It's a good way to study the anatomy and avoid mistakes in the proportions. The final sketch should be clear, with sharp, distinct lines and few extra details to simplify work in the image editor.

I often change the painting during the work. The wide spectrum of settings in computer graphics enables your painting to stay fresh from beginning to end.

In all my paintings, I try to incarnate and convey not only the story I invent for the character, but the airiness and the atmosphere of the fairy tale. For that, I have my own secret techniques in Painter...

Artist PROFILE

Katarina Sokolova

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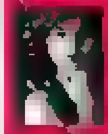

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katarinasokolova.com

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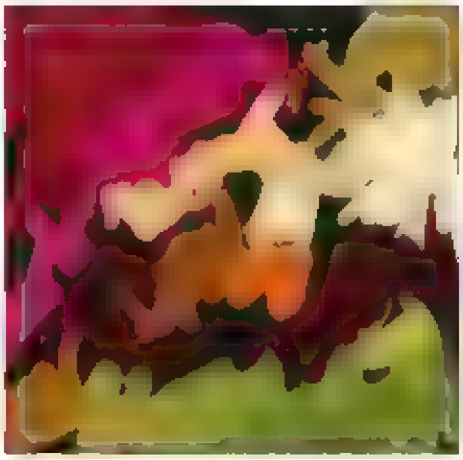


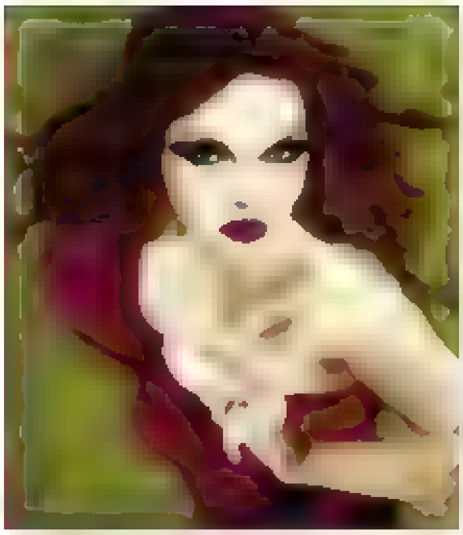
2 Creating the palette

I work in Painter. I only use Photoshop for colour correction and the fine detailing of a finished picture. Before starting to paint, I create a colour palette and try to stick to those colours during the painting process, mixing new tints and changing them just slightly, but staying within the general colour key of the painting. Here I've chosen a warm palette: saturated purple for the dress, reddish-golden-chocolate for the hair and saturated grassy-yellow for the leaves. For the druid's skin, I have chosen olive-peach tones.

PRO SECRETS

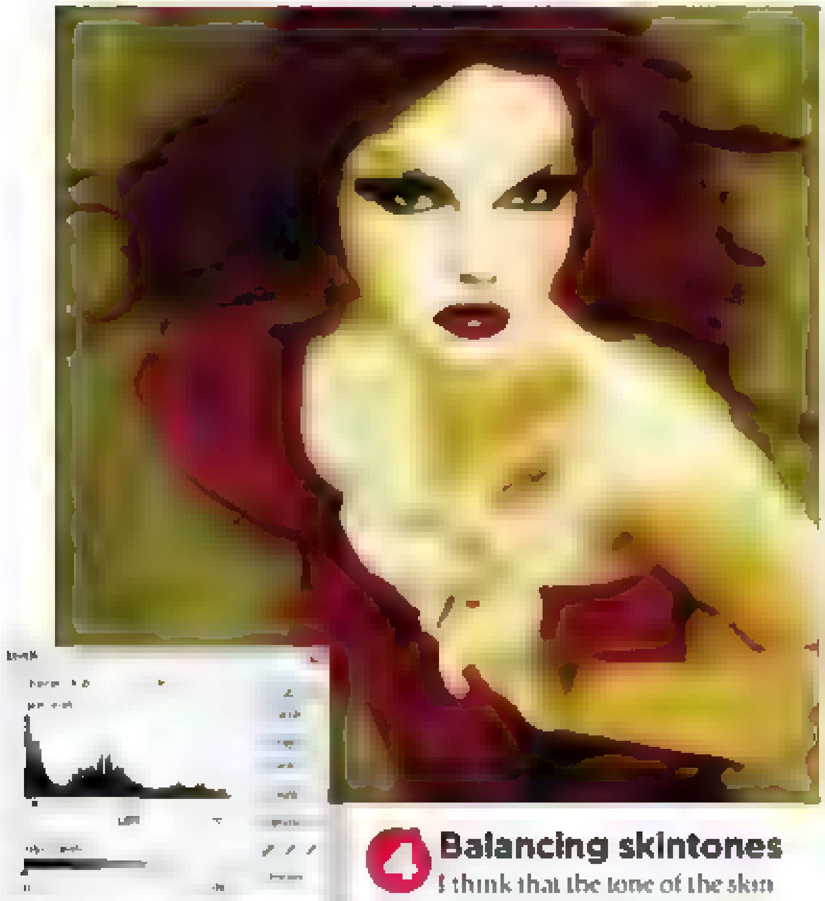
Visual harmony

I think the most important thing in a portrait is the harmony between the object and the background. This is mainly achieved through the interaction of colours. I usually create a palette for background, skin, hair and clothing from three or four basic colours. I constantly [illegible] this palette. It gives me a wide variety of colours and tints. I get shadows and highlights by mixing the basic colours and adding black and white. It's good to take colours from the planes and add them to the main object and vice versa, for [illegible]



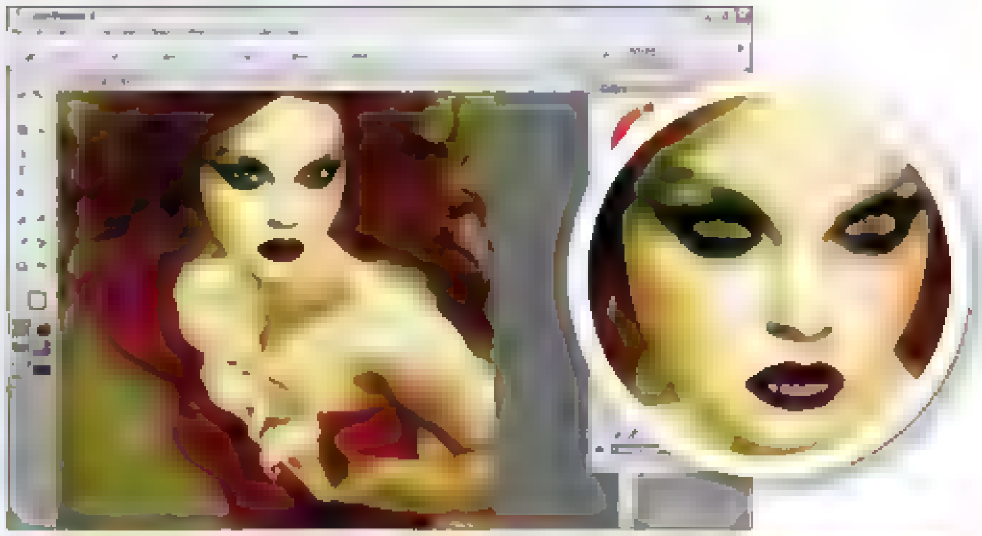
3 Make up first

I apply the main colour spots according to the sketch. At this stage, I use a Large Hard brush with my own settings from the Calligraphy brushes. With the colour spotted, I next sketch the make-up. In keeping with the dramatic character it will be strong, with saturated black shadows and juicy dark purple lips.



4 Balancing skintones

I think that the tone of the skin is too pale and gets lost among the saturated colours of the leaves and the dress. The figure must harmoniously fit into its surroundings. From one side there is a shadow of a dress, which adds a purple tint to the skin. On the other, there is the forest, which makes a green reflection in the shadows. Therefore I switch to Photoshop and use Color Balance to make the skin tone more saturated and complex. I add purple tints to the shadows on the right side and olive tints to the left. This creates an effect of complex lighting and light play. I always choose the source of light intuitively.

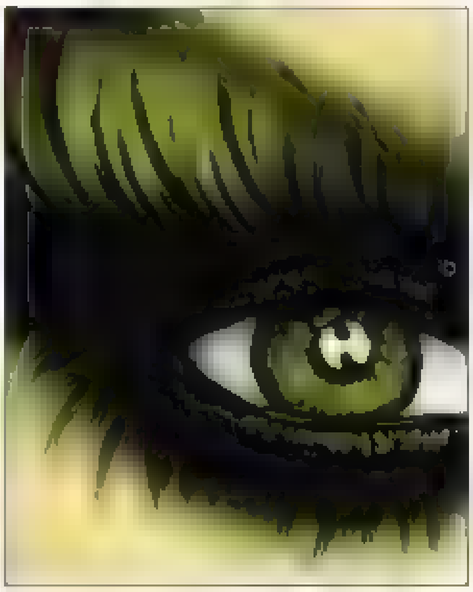


5 Choosing the light

I switch to Painter again. At this stage, I work on the face and body. I already have the necessary palette of tones, so I detail the face and hands, adding highlights and shadows. I want to create the effect of soft, magical light.

I always use a Wet Acrylic brush for skin. I think it's an ideal brush for the skin's surface: it adds texture and softens sharp colour changes at the same time. It's especially useful in my case, as I want to mix two complementary colours – purple and olive – into the same tone.

When I've finished detailing the skin on the face and body, I create a new layer set to Shadow Map (Try using Multiply in Photoshop.) Here, using only olive and purple colours, I start to paint shadows using an Artistic Oils brush with Opacity set to around 6 per cent. Then I create another layer to add highlights and reflections on the skin with an Artistic Oils brush with 10-15 per cent Opacity. I mix new tints, simply adding white into my Mixer palette.



6 Detailing the face

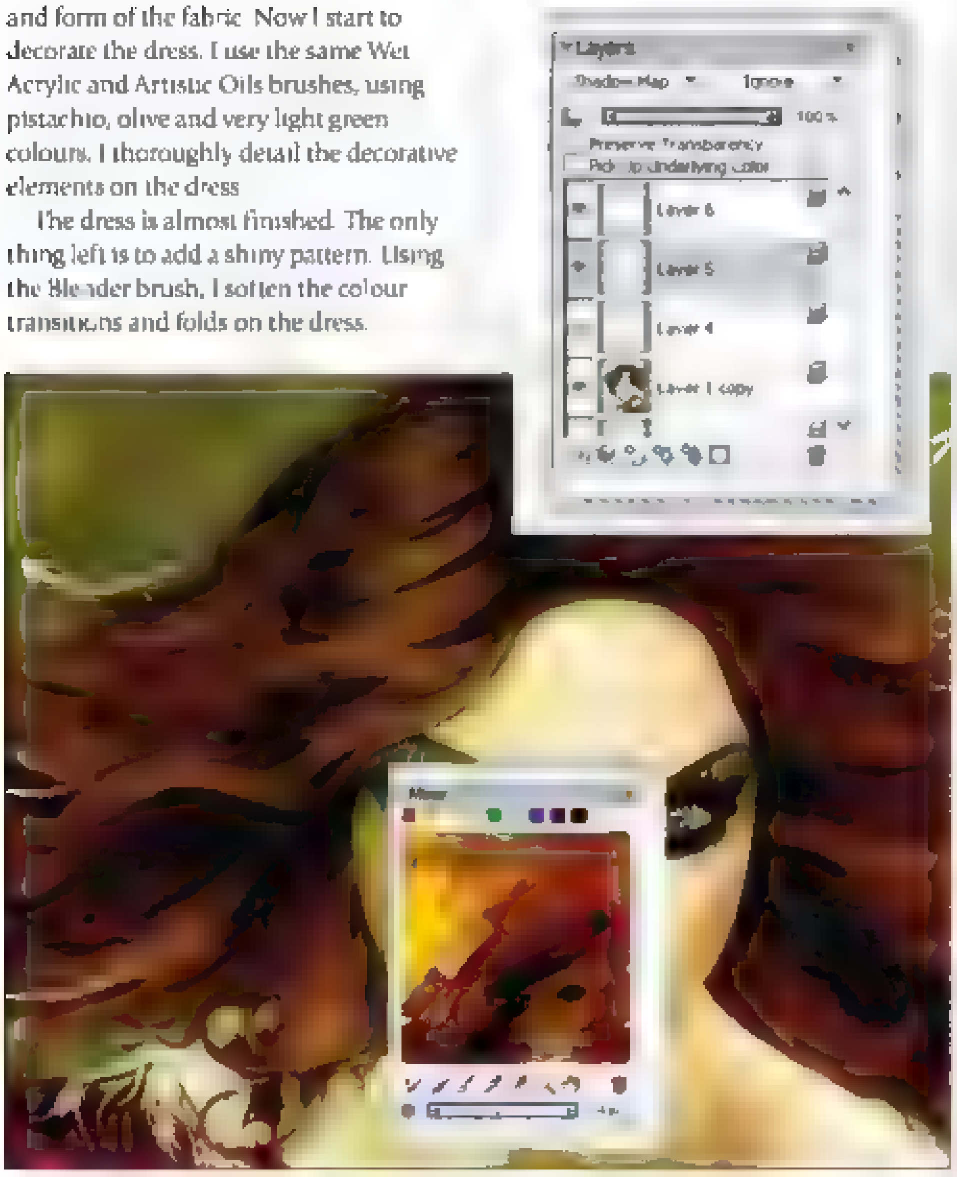
I start to detail the face. Usually I do that at the very beginning of my work so the portrait comes to life, and I start to feel the character of my subject. I use Artistic Oils and Wet Acrylic brushes of a small diameter, taking Opacity between 5 and 35 per cent. I use Blenders for stumping and smoothing. I paint eyebrows with a Wet Acrylic brush. I want my druid to look mysterious but also dangerous, so I pay a lot of attention to the saturated make-up of the eyes, using dark green and black colours. This is my favourite technique for painting eyes.

7 Dress making

I start to work on the dress. I decided to make it from atlas satin, and to richly decorate it with sparkles and feathers. The structure is complicated, with its folds and drapery. As a reference I use models from recent Dior collections. I use Artistic Oils and Wet Acrylic brushes with an Opacity between 25 to 35 per cent to detail the folds and the texture of the fabric.

Atlas is a hard and shiny fabric. Sometimes I use a hard brush from the Calligraphy tab with my own settings to detail bright, clear highlights on convex surfaces of the folds. I work with touches and short strokes, following the volume and form of the fabric. Now I start to decorate the dress. I use the same Wet Acrylic and Artistic Oils brushes, using pistachio, olive and very light green colours. I thoroughly detail the decorative elements on the dress.

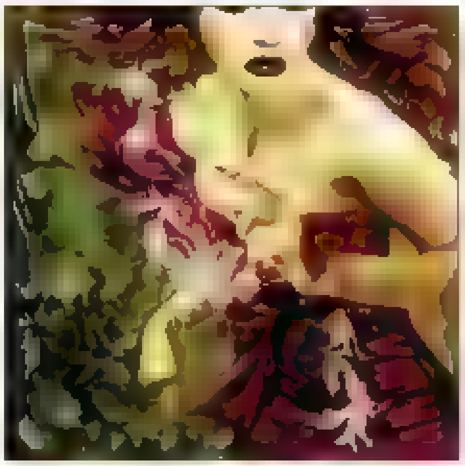
The dress is almost finished. The only thing left is to add a shiny pattern. Using the Blender brush, I soften the colour transitions and folds on the dress.



8 The surroundings

I now turn my attention to the surroundings. I decide to place the fairy in an autumn forest, when the green grass is still juicy but has already started to add yellow tones. I will not be detailing the far plane and therefore I paint it with a large soft brush with an Opacity of 50-60 per cent, using the tints of green, yellow and olive. I start to sketch the contours of trees with a soft brush and then wash out the final result with the Blender brush.

I decide to paint a tree on the front plane, so that the druid can be looking from behind. It's not a very important object, so I paint it fast, as if sketching, using soft and hard brushes with Opacity between 50-60 per cent. I sketch a piece of a tree trunk, densely covered with a foliage of olive colour with large spots. Then I create a new layer, and using a smaller brush of the same type I sketch the general form and the direction of branches, the mass of leaves and in some places the bark of the tree. When I am satisfied with the result, I choose a new light salad tone and using Artistic Oils of a medium diameter and an Opacity of 20-25 per cent, add to the leaves some small strokes that imitate the dappled spots of sunlight.



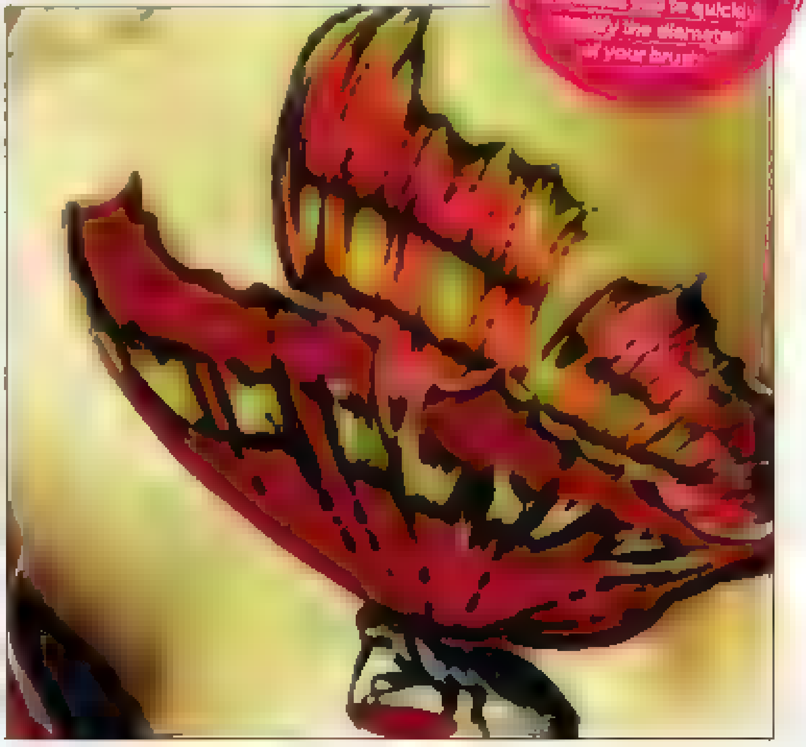
9 Capturing the hair

I create a separate palette for the hair, with a reddish-chestnut base colour. I want her to have flowing hair, and immediately sketch the main locks. Then I start to model the larger locks in the general bulk of hair. For that I use slightly lighter reddish-chestnut and saturated reddish-orange colours. I use a round Camel Hair with 30 per cent Opacity.

When the general form of the locks is determined, I detail them with smaller curls and separate hairs. I use Artistic Oils of a small diameter and at no more than 20 per cent Opacity. I use a dark-chestnut colour for detailing individual hairs, and a light orange for the highlights. I paint thoroughly, putting hairs here and there, and add a slightly careless look to the lustrous locks.

I add a new layer set to Shadow Map: using a large soft brush with an Opacity of 5-7 per cent, and with a greenish-brown colour, I deepen the shadows. I then create another new layer and, using the same brush with very saturated light orange-pink tint, smooth out some highlights. Then I put all the layers together and smooth some locks. I strongly wash out and smooth the flowing curls. That adds volume to the hair and makes it dynamic.

Shortcuts
Brush diameter
[and]
[illegible] for painting. [illegible] to quickly [illegible] the diameter of your brush

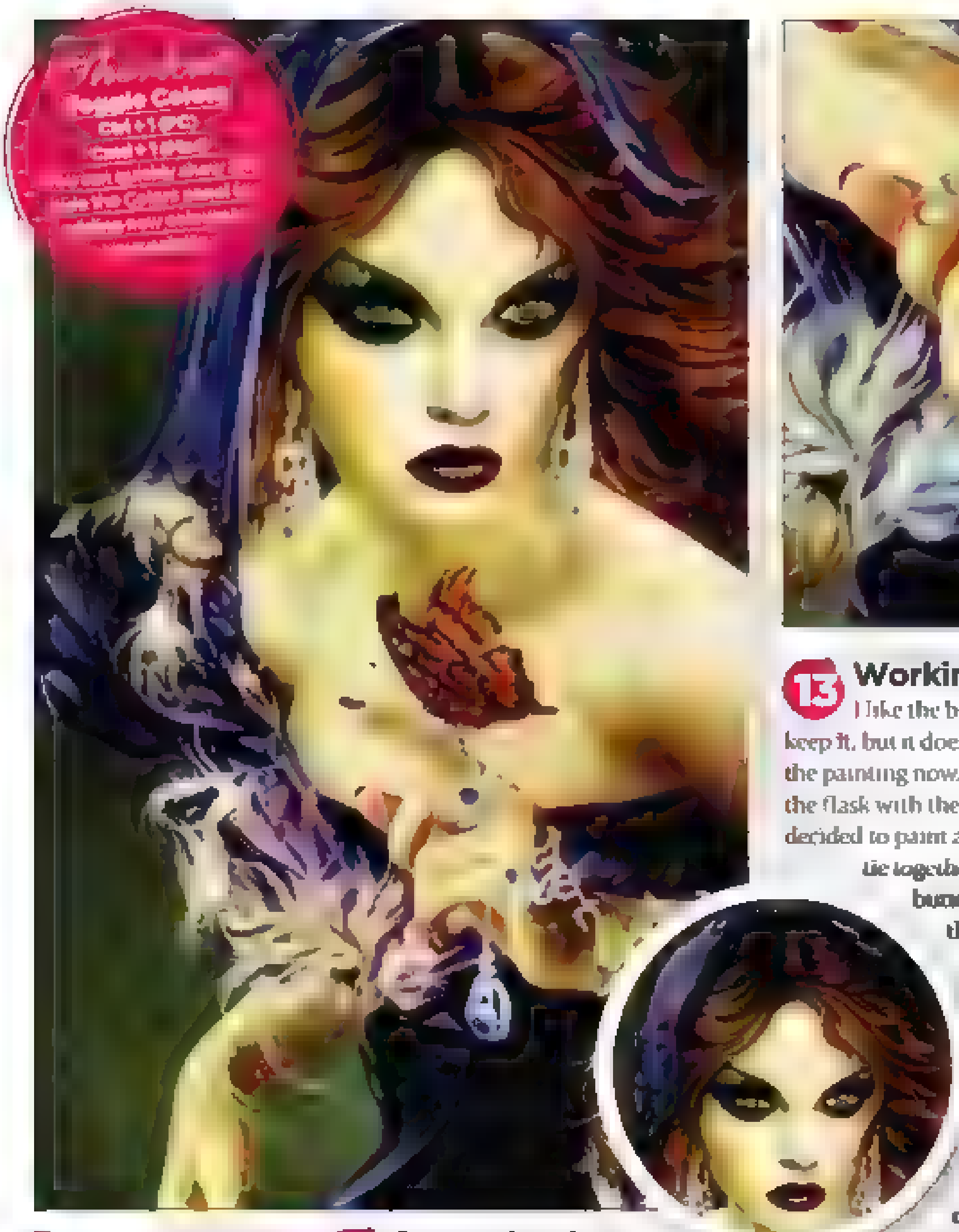


10 Adding extra items

I want to add a small detail to the painting that will add some character to it. I think that a butterfly would ideally fit my story. I paint it sitting on the druid's finger, in the middle of the composition. I use a hard brush of 40-50 per cent Opacity and a purple colour. In order for the butterfly to be distinct from the dress, I slightly dilute the purple with crimson. When I am satisfied with the form of the wings and the position of the butterfly, I start to detail its wings using a Wet Acrylic brush of a small diameter. I add olive spots and rainbow-like transitions to its wings. Later, using some black, I paint patterns onto its wings, then add legs and feelers.

11 Changing the tone

I have decided to change my idea to make it darker and more mystical. I want to turn the druid into an enigmatic fortune-teller. In order to convey the dark atmosphere and ominous beauty of the new story, I need to make some changes. I remove the tree from the front plane and start drawing new surroundings. I have decided to make it very simple, painting the wall of the underground bunker where the fortune teller lives. I paint fast, using saturated olive and black colours. I use a Wet Acrylic brush and the brushes from the Palette Knife tab with a large and medium diameter to achieve the effect of a dark, textured wall.



Toggle Colour
Ctrl + 1 (PC)
Cmd + 1 (Mac)
[illegible]

PRO SECRETS

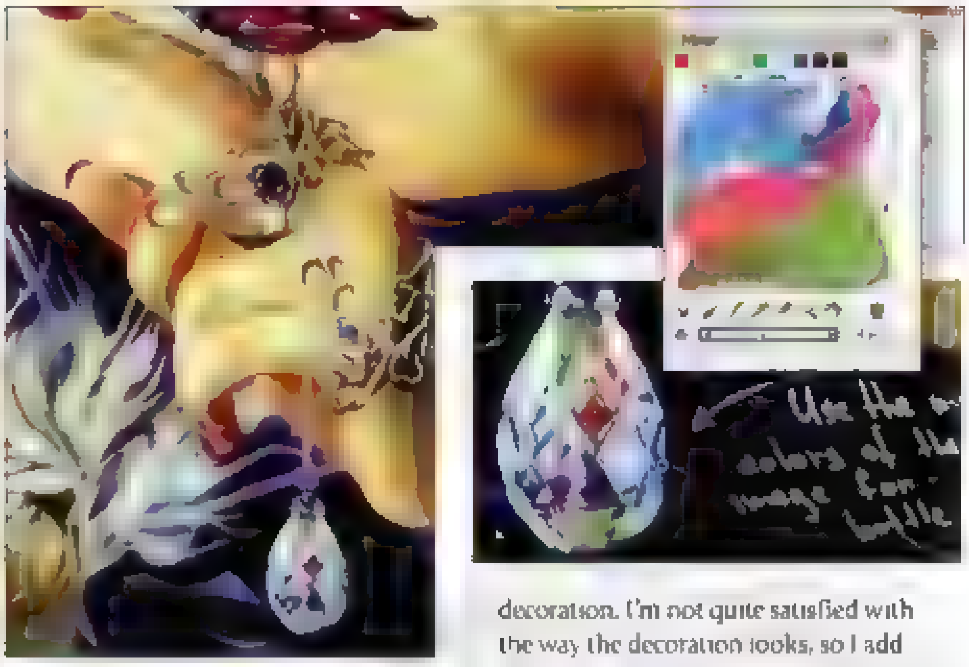
Physical atmosphere

The most important element of the picture for me is the feeling of [illegible]. I achieve this by working with transparent strokes. This technique is particularly suited for painting the skin, because you get a broad selection of [illegible]. Using Opacity values between 5 and 40 per cent, I put strokes of different colours on top of each other [illegible] transparency [illegible]. This technique [illegible] per cent Opacity [illegible] makes the picture [illegible] and not alive.

12 Re-evaluating the outfit

I also want to change the colour of the dress. I think the purple is too bright, and is not appropriate for such a mystical character. I switch to Photoshop, make a copy of the layer with the dress and create several colour-correcting layers via New Adjustment Layer in the Layer palette: Color Balance, Levels, Curves and Hue/Saturation. I put layers on top of each other until I get the result that satisfies me. I put together the copy of the layer with the dress with all colour-correcting layers, and using the Eraser I remove the unneeded parts of the layer from the skin and face.

To add a hood to the character's head I switch to Painter and paint it using a Soft Brush and the tones of the dress. Using the Eraser I remove the unneeded body of hair. Then I slightly correct the body of the hair from all sides, and add several sticky-out curls. On a new layer set to Shadow Map and using a soft brush with an Opacity of 10 per cent, I use the main greyish-blue colour of the fabric to add shadows under the hood, so it doesn't look like it's attached to the head.

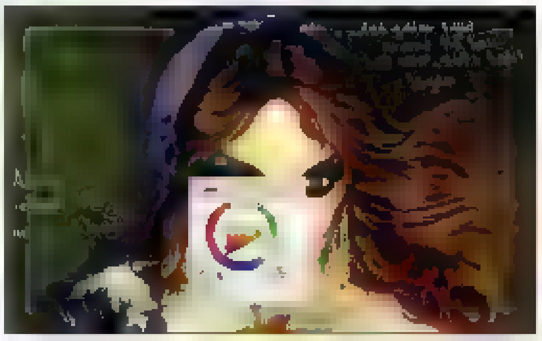


13 Working on jewellery

I like the butterfly, and I want to keep it, but it doesn't really fit the style of the painting now. Besides, I want to paint the flask with the elixir of death. I've decided to paint a bracelet, which will tie together the flask and the butterfly, and will emphasise the idea of the painting.

The silver bracelet consists of many curls and hoops that naturally become the ring. I paint it with a small brush. Then I paint the chain that's attached to one of the curls, and which will hold the flask with the elixir of death. I want it to be made of facet crystal, the precious stone. Crystal refracts light, so I choose pale blue for its base colour. I use purple, grass and turquoise colours to paint the highlights on the sides of the flask.

I decide to keep the wings of the butterfly, but to make its body metal and to connect it to a curl of the bracelet. That way, the butterfly becomes the part of the decoration. I'm not quite satisfied with the way the decoration looks, so I add several inlaid sapphires, to go with the colour of the dress. I also add sapphire earrings for a little more dazzling sparkle.



14 Add the finishing touches

The picture is practically finished, so I switch to Photoshop to add finishing touches. I create a new layer with a Screen blending mode, choose a very bright blue screen, and add a halo around the flask. Then I create a new layer with a Multiply blending mode and add a few shadows using a soft brush with a low opacity, using base colours from the hair and dress (red-golden and bilberry).

15 Smoothing it out

My mysterious druid woman is looking most beautiful. But there are still a few things left to do to finish her off and make her look perfect. For the final touches, I put all the layers together, smooth everything in Painter and wash out a few areas in Photoshop using the Blur Tool. This tool is very important for helping you to emphasise objects and their interactions between one another. I take the colours from the far plane and add them to the character if I feel it is necessary. It's important for their interaction to single out a few objects. That's it. I'm happy with the result, it's the image I wanted to create ●

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Rendering the face

A co[illegible] workshop on pa[illegible] facial features

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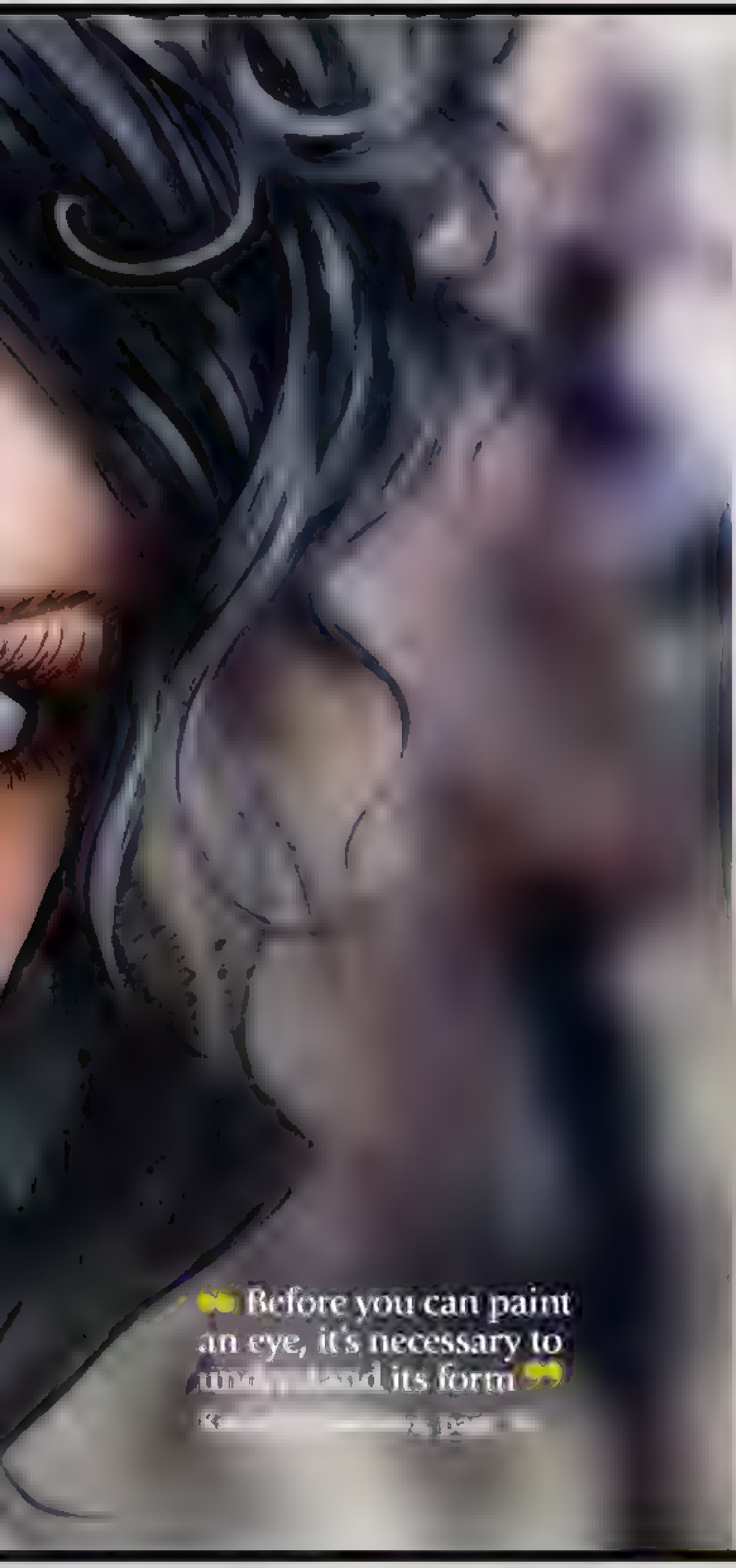
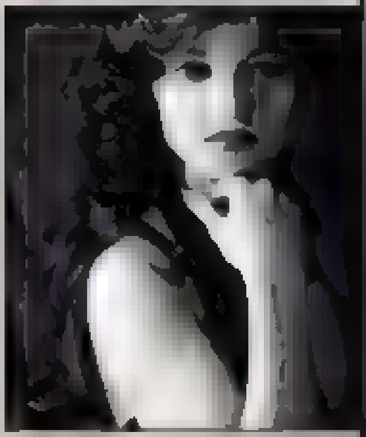


“Before you can paint an eye, it's necessary to understand its form”

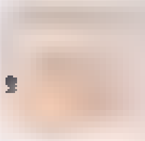
[illegible]

Your fantasy portrait expert
Katarina Sokolova specialises in painting exotic women with mysterious stories. She's also a digital artist and photographer. Her work is collected in the book [illegible] and she also exhibits her images in her home town of Kiev
katarinasokolova.com



Workshops

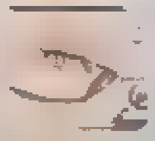
The four key components that make the perfect face



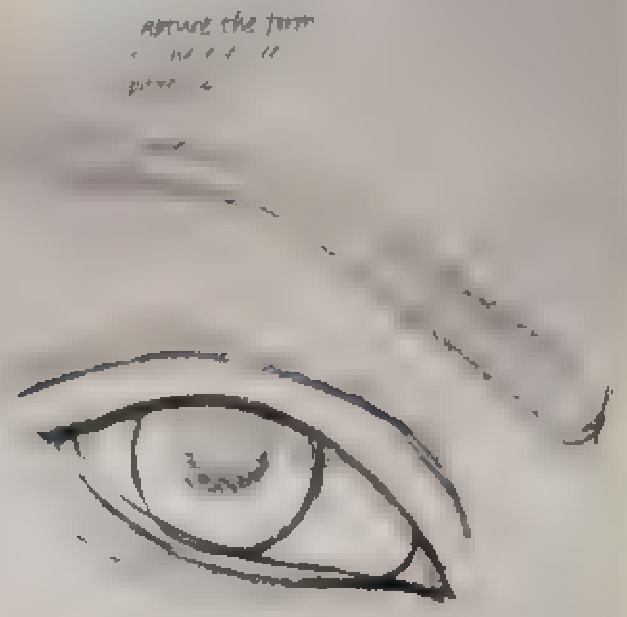
34 Painting the eyes
The key for capturing the eye is remembering that it's a three-dimensional form

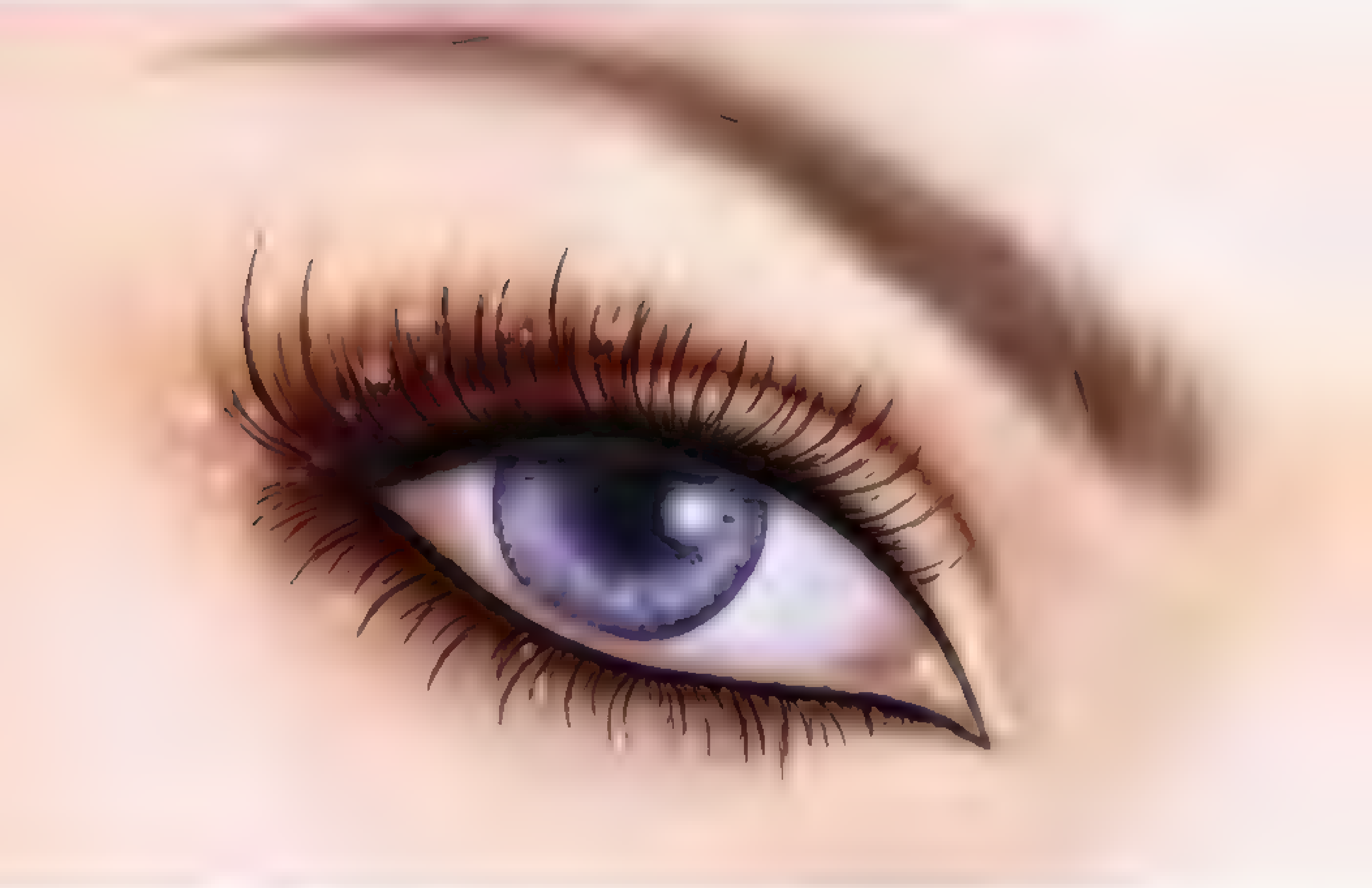
36 Painting the nose
Give your fantasy female a unique nose to bring out her allure and suggest her personality

38 Painting the ears
Often avoided in favour of long hair, the ears can add grace and vulnerability to your character.



40 Painting the lips
The most sensuous part of the face, the lips demand careful attention in drawing and texturing.





PROFILE

[illegible]

PAINTING THE EYES

Eyes are so expressive, showing character, mood and beauty. Draw their form to make them look natural

Before you can paint an eye, it's necessary to understand its form. The human eye is a sphere, covered by upper and lower eyelids. If you imagine parallel lines passing along the eyes, that will make it easier for you to understand how to construct your sketch correctly.

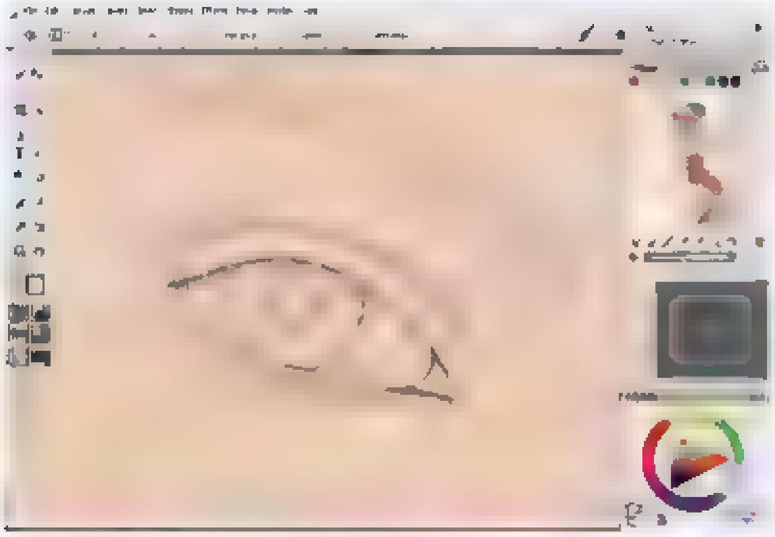
Eyes come in many forms, depending on the facial type and race of the person. The upper eyelid is wider than the lower one because of its function – to cover and protect the eye. You can also use it to add expression and emotion to your character. Half-closed eyelids convey languor and allure; squinted eyes look sly or playful. Don't forget that there's also a lower eyelid – if it's missed, the eye will look unrealistic. There's also a tear duct in the inside corner of the eye. Again, eyes look odd without this.

I can't stress the significance of detailing the iris enough. This part is responsible for the volume and expressiveness of the eye – as well as its colour, of course.

Personally, I find it very important to draw eyelashes. I always make them slightly unreal, too long or of unusual colours. Sometimes I put sparkles on them, or add tears trickling down. This is always a final step in my portraits.

During this workshop, I'm going to look at all aspects of painting an eye, including the eyelashes and make-up. I like to paint beautiful girls, and I never leave their eyes without make-up. Remember, though, the make-up can be rich, but it shouldn't be vulgar.

I use Painter to create this portrait, but most of my techniques work in Photoshop as well.



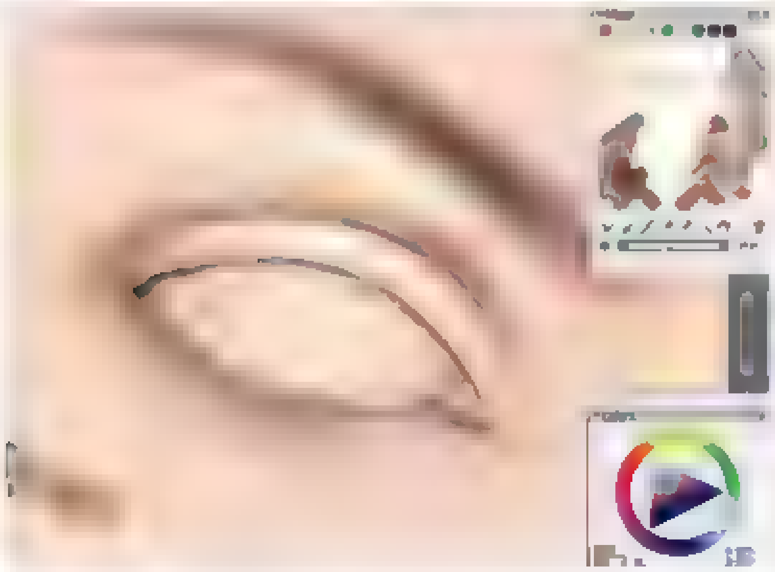
First sketch

First, I make a sketch of a simple eye; just the basic shape, really. It needs to show the lower eyelid and the tear duct. Don't forget that part of the iris is hidden behind the upper and lower eyelid. Like the eyeball, both the iris and the pupil must be absolutely round. I slightly shade the corners of the eye and put a shadow above the upper eyelid. Next, I shade the lower eyelid to give volume to the eye. Finally, I create the shape of the eyebrow. I scan the sketch and put it in Multiply layer mode, then pick a first colour – the colour of the skin. I've chosen a beige-lilac tone for this painting.

Shadows and highlights

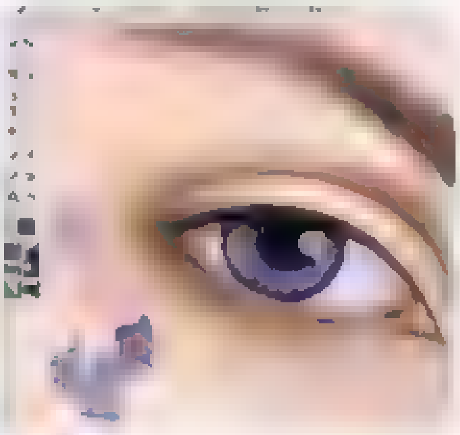
It's time to start work with shadows and highlights. I pick a lighter, warmer beige-pink colour for highlighting the inside part of the lower and upper eyelid. I'm using soft brushes for this, and I use the same brush with a bigger diameter to add highlights under the eyebrow, from the inside of the eye.

After I've done the highlights, I start to add shadows. I start by shading the lower eyelid according to the sketch, then put shadows on the upper eyelid. I then place shadows and highlights further along both lids to add volume. Finally, I paint the tear duct with some light beige strokes.



PRO SECRETS

Add eyelashes on two to three layers; this way you can add density and curl them. It will also add volume. On the first layer, paint the shorter eyelashes using a soft brush with high transparency. Paint thinner eyelashes o[illegible] [illegible] second layer. On the third layer, use a very small brush with Opacity [illegible]

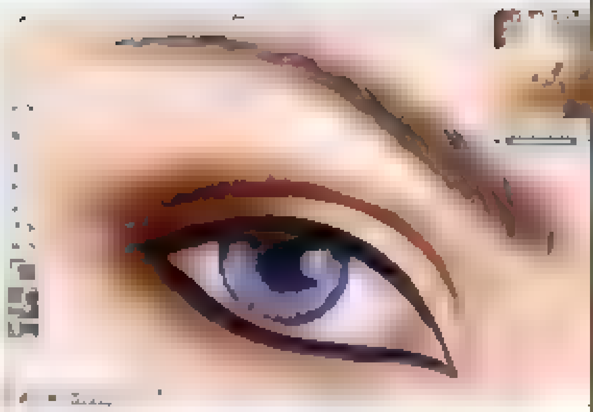


Detailing the iris

Painting the eyeball with different-opacity soft brushes, I decide on a light bluish-grey tint. Keep in mind that the most convex part of the eyeball must be the lightest. With Opacity set to 5 per cent, I add some brush strokes using a tint of the primary skin colour on the shaded sites of the eyeball on a new layer set to Color. Then I start to paint the iris.

I pick a random dark blue colour (a little bit darker than necessary) and paint the circle on the eyeball. Then, on top of that, I put a lighter blue colour that will leave a narrow dark edge. I paint the pupil in the centre of the iris, and add a highlight to it; the placement of the highlight depends on the location of the main light source in the image.

Next, I put a dark stroke on the iris under the upper eyelid, then start adding detail. I add small strokes and specks using a soft brush with grey blue, cold pink and bright blue hues.

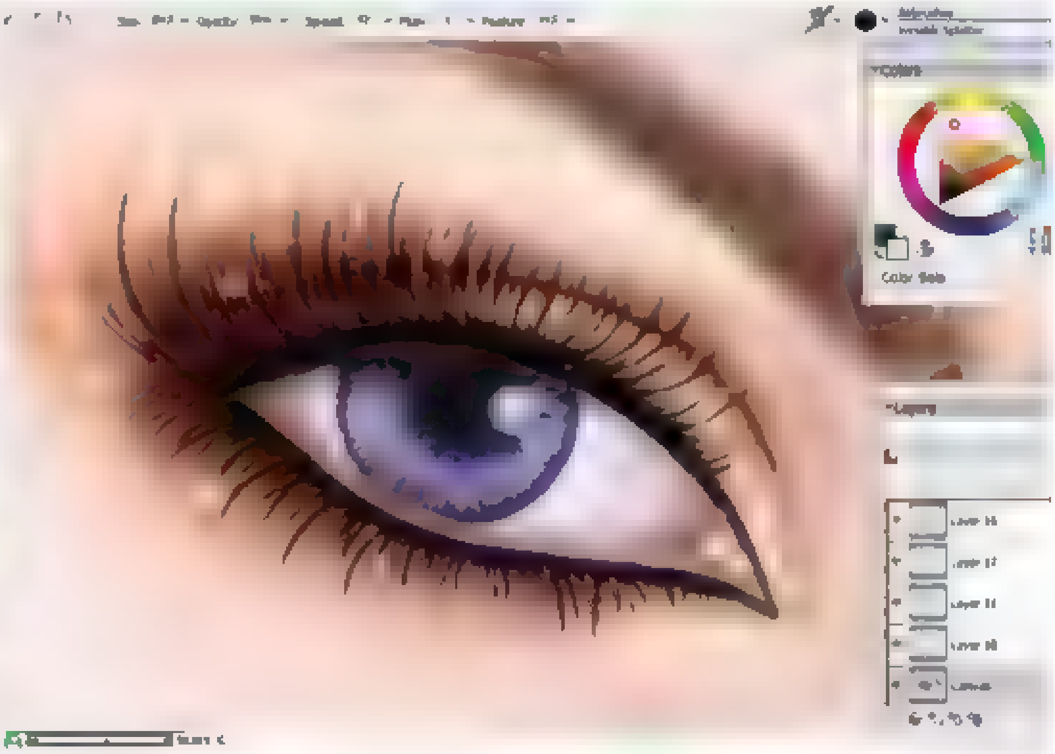


Add make-up

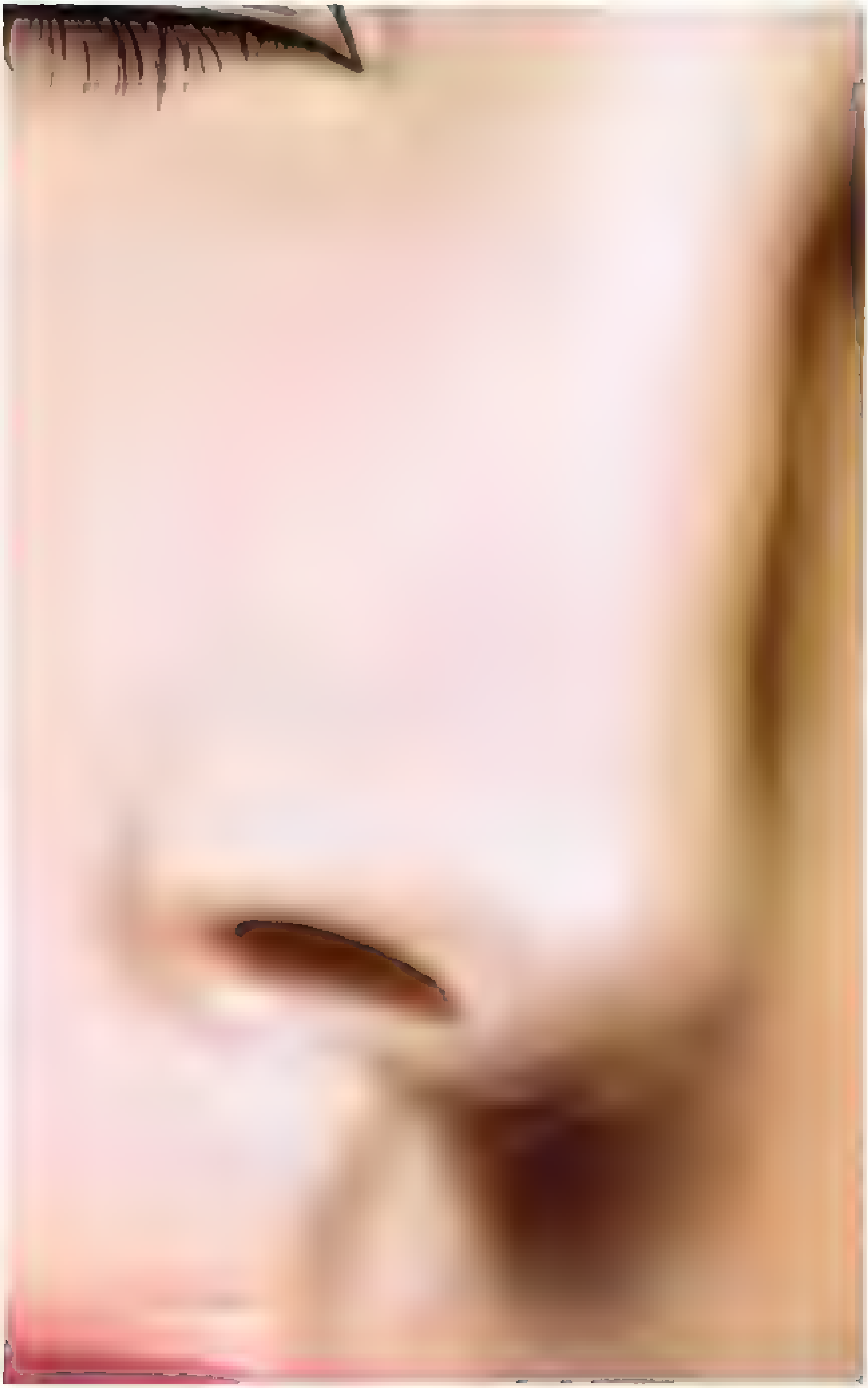
I pick a beige-pink colour and paint it between the upper eyelid and eye socket. I add strokes of a warm chocolate colour on the outside of the upper eyelid, then put a warm beige stroke on the whole area under the brow. Next, I make the area under the lower eyelid a little lighter. Using a soft brush with 20 per cent Opacity, I paint a black line along the outer edges of the lower and upper lids – it should thicken towards the external corner. I increase the brush size, set Opacity to 15 per cent and paint along the contour of the upper and lower lids.

Eyelashes

I paint the eyelashes with quick strokes, using a soft brush with Opacity no greater than 20 per cent. After that, I add longer and darker lashes using smaller brushes with 25 to 35 per cent Opacity. Eyelashes should be denser at the outside edge. I paint them curled up and about twice as long as they are in real life, and I like to paint bottom lashes almost as long as the top ones to add mood. Finally, I add some sparkles with the Airbrush set to Variable Splatter in a non-saturated pink ●



PAINTING THE NOSE



Visualise this area as a 3D form to master one of the more difficult areas of painting a convincing face

Despite the apparent great variety of forms we observe in noses, they all have a common structure defined by the anatomy of bones and muscles. In general, there are two types of human nose: thick and thin. The proportions of all noses are roughly the same, and this should be taken into consideration while you're painting.

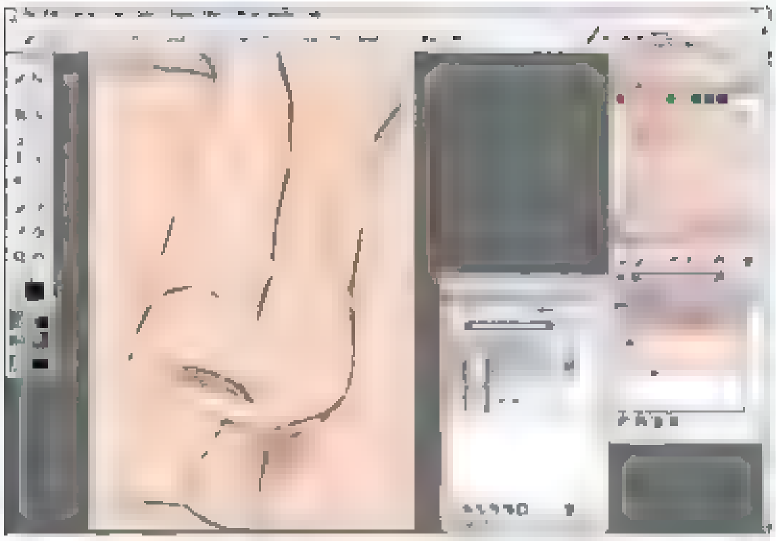
Thin noses, which are usually typical of Europeans, can have many different forms depending on the bridge, tip and nostrils. The bridge is the part that is between the top and tip of the nose and can be straight, concave or convex

You should begin any sketch with the basic proportions (height, length width), then define the inclination and position of the nose with respect to perspective. Keep in mind that the nose is a three-dimensional form as you draw After sketching the main outline, you need to check the nose's proportions, perspective and form, and make any corrections to these before moving on With that done, you can start work on the details.

The nose depends on its individual characteristics. Because the bones are usually visible in most noses, one of the most character-defining properties of the nose is a small hump this, along with the tip, defines the overall form of the nose. The bridge of the nose determines the form of the tip, which can be straight, turned up or pointing down. As for the nostrils, they can be long or short, narrow or wide

A common mistake while setting out the nose structure is to set the bases of the edges of the nose too low in relation to the tip, resulting in the corner of the nose ending up in the wrong place

When you're drawing a nose, pay close attention to each separate part of it, and be sure that each of the individual elements obeys the overall form.

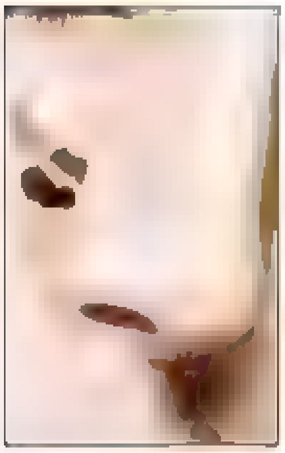


1 Starting sketch

I'll begin with a sketch. The girl I want to paint has a thin nose with a small hump and slightly snub tip, which makes her look coquettish. I've chosen a three-quarters perspective. The lateral plane of the nose that's turned to the painter isn't reduced in this perspective, while the opposite part of the nose and the plane of the base are reduced. (In this case, they're practically hidden.) Notice that the far nostril is almost invisible in a three-quarters perspective – but it still exists, so you must remember to paint it.

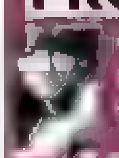
2 Light and shade

In Painter, start working with shadows and highlights. The front part of the nose should be lighter than the sides, and I try to create soft transitions between shadows and light. The portrait hasn't got sharp transitions on the face so shadows on the nose shouldn't be traced strongly. Do consider the light exposure in transitions of forms from one surface to another.



Sketch the nostrils, and note that the edge of the nostril is on the same line as the inner corner of the eye. I shade the parts that are in shadow. Don't paint sharp edges, convey the form with soft lines. The gradation of the light helps to show structure. The details of the near plane should be clearer than those of the far plane. I also shade the dark side of the nose, which is on the right side here. It provides the illusion of depth and size. Finally, I add some shade to the bridge.

Artist PROFILE



Katarina Sokolova

[illegible]

Ukraine

[illegible] work at her website [illegible]

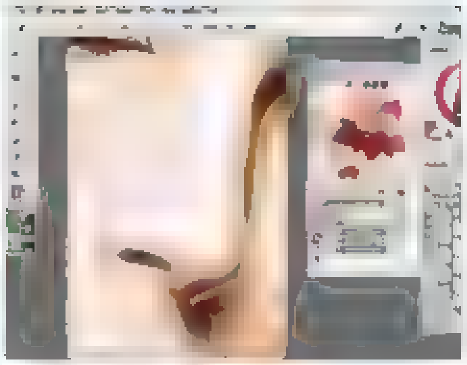
On the disc

Find workshop files and screenshots in the [illegible]

PRO SECRETS

Use colour

Don't use black for shadows or white for highlights and reflections. [illegible] tints that are [illegible] into shadows and highlights. [illegible] more realistic.



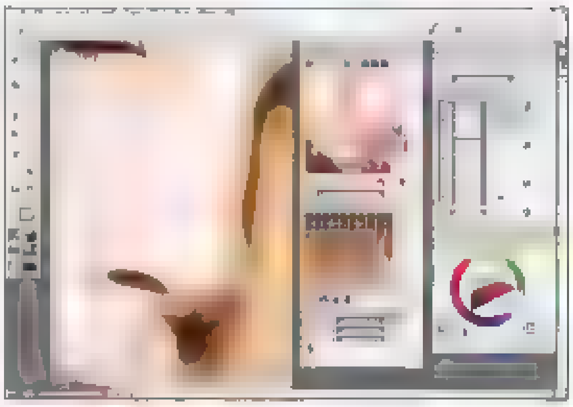
3 Skin tints

Don't forget that second nostril! I've sketched it with a small highlight stroke at the far side of the nose. Don't mark a full contour of a nose from both sides – that makes the portrait appear unrealistic. Instead, create a contour with smooth transitions between light and shadow. Usually, the areas around the base of the nostrils should not be outlined. I convey their volume and form using warmer, more saturated skin tints. At this stage, I gradually add detail to the nostrils and the tip of the nose with highlights that are hardly visible.

4 Highlights

Next, I paint the highlight on the tip of the nose to add volume. The highlight should be small and softly shaded. Remember not to use pure white in any highlight.

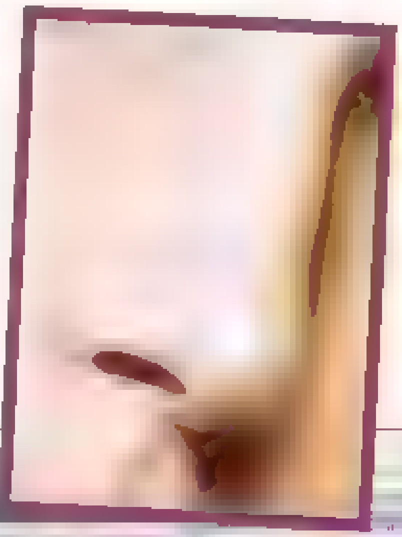
Notice that for the nostril I've chosen a rich chocolate, not black. I've also painted the nasolabial groove, the area that connects the nose with the lips. The shape is rather like a teardrop – at the top, it's as wide as the septum but it expands slightly when it meets the upper lip. I've slightly shaded this groove – note the small highlight that I put in its centre to show its concavity.

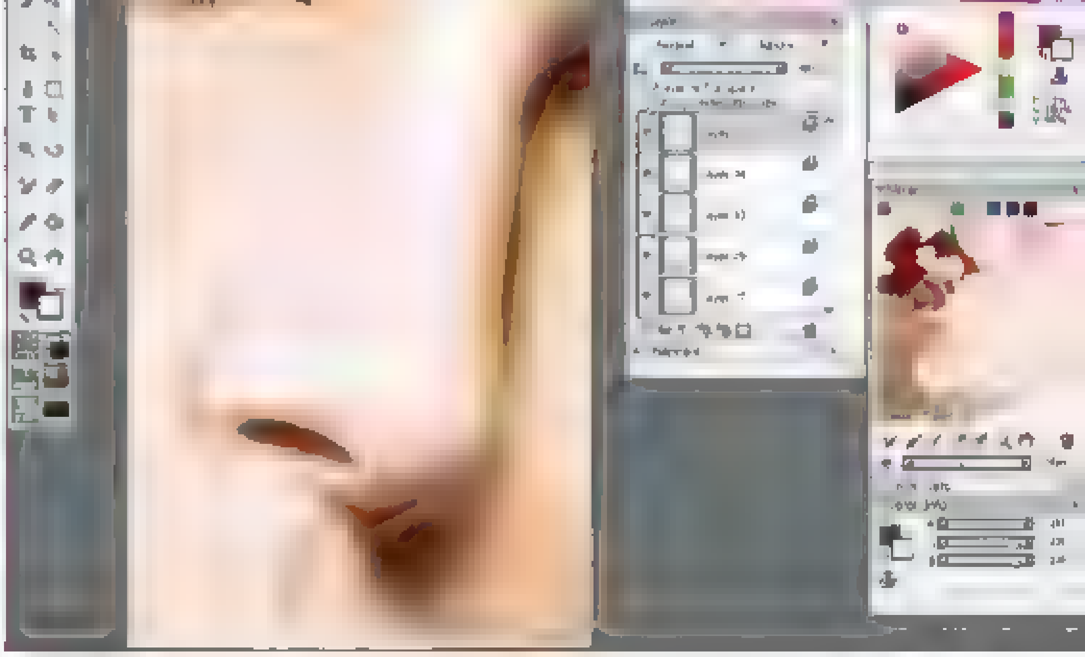


5 Grooves and contrast

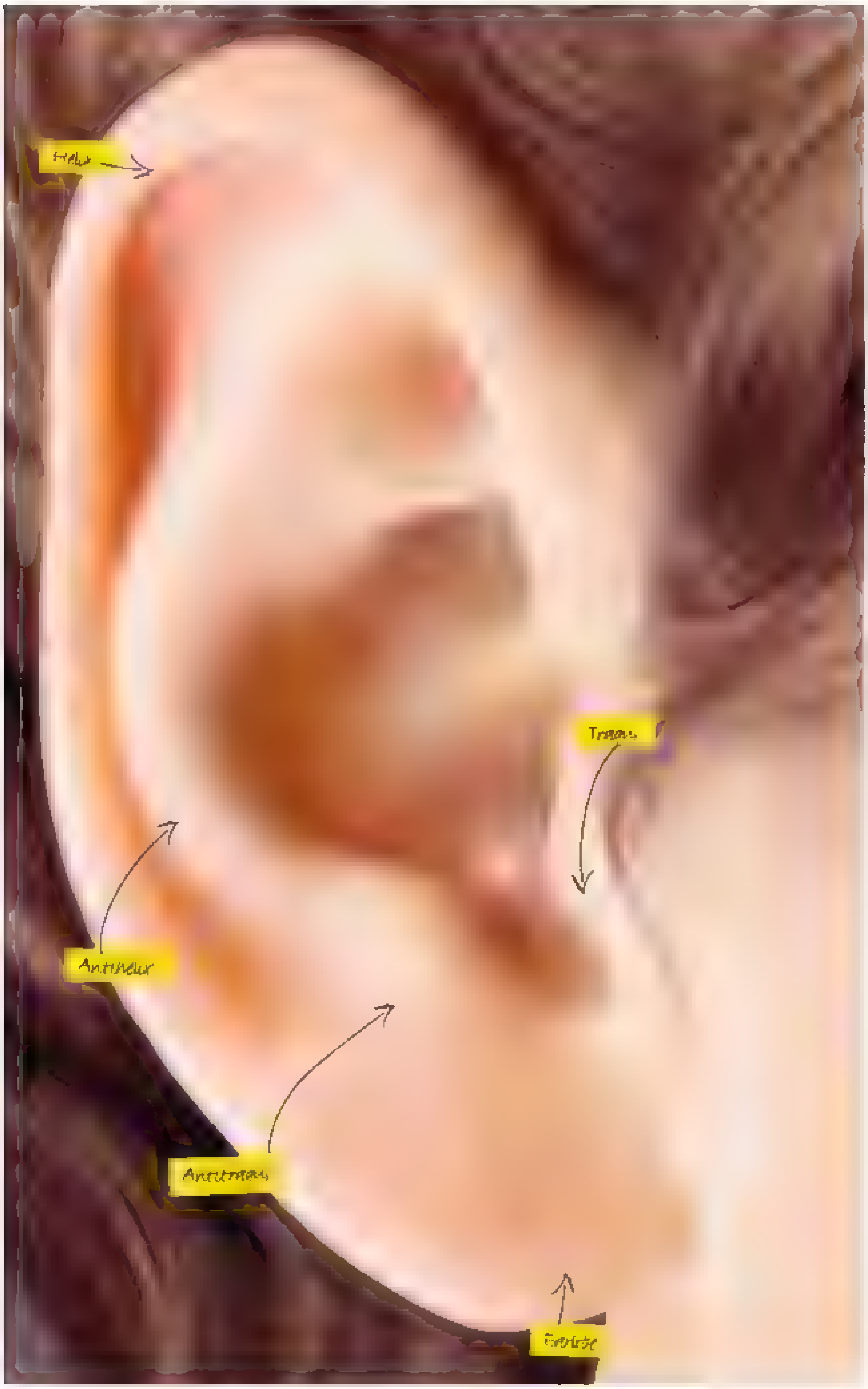
I want to add more contrast to the nose from its far side. For that, I make the shadow beyond the nose deeper, using a small-diameter brush with high transparency. That way, I can mark out a small hump on the nose. Then, using a soft brush with a greater diameter, I make the shadow under the nose deeper and more degraded with a non-saturated brown.

I also take time to detail the form of the nose, using the tints of base skin colour. For the lighter areas of the nose, I use warmer tints of colour, and for shadows, cooler tints with some lilac. ●





PAINTING THE EARS



Ears are too often a forgotten feature in portraits, but they can add bags of personality to any character

Ears are a very important part of a character's personality. Unfortunately they're often forgotten in portraits, or simply covered by hair. That's a pity: an open ear, decorated by a beautiful earring, visually extends the neck to create a pleasing shape, and can prove a subtle device in giving the character an aura of sensuality, finesse and even daintiness.

Like the other parts of the face, ears vary in form, character and size. Despite their variety, all ears have a common structure that's a vital consideration when constructing an image.

The base of an auricle consists of complex curved forms. It's almost completely made of cartilage with the exception of its bottom part, the earlobe.

The edges of the auricle have a thickening, called the helix. The antihelix is the next curved section of the auricle laying inside the helix. In the middle of the auricle is the tragus, a cavity whose front part has a characteristic ledge. Opposite the tragus, there's another ledge, called the antitragus. At the bottom of the ear is the familiar earlobe.

Unlike the other parts of the auricle the earlobe has no cartilage. Its form is extremely diverse. Earlobes can be chubby, flat or angular. They even can be almost absent, merging right into the bottom of the ear. For some people earlobes are located in the same plane as the rest of the auricle, whereas for others those shapes are on different planes.

When you start sketching ears, begin with the general form. Start the sketch by defining the axial line, which helps to correctly establish the ear position compared to the rest of the head. At the same time, while building the form of an auricle in three-quarter perspective, pay attention to its position in the space. External outlines of an auricle look like an ellipse. Remember, some ears are close to the head, while others protrude away

Pencil sketch

The ears are drawn between the top of the eyes and the bottom of the nose. The top of the ear must be in line with the eyebrow, while the point where the ear is attached to the head should be on the same line as the eyes. I then mark the ellipse-looking plane of an auricle. Remember, the ear is the link between the head and the neck. I give it the correct proportions – an ear's width is roughly half of its height.

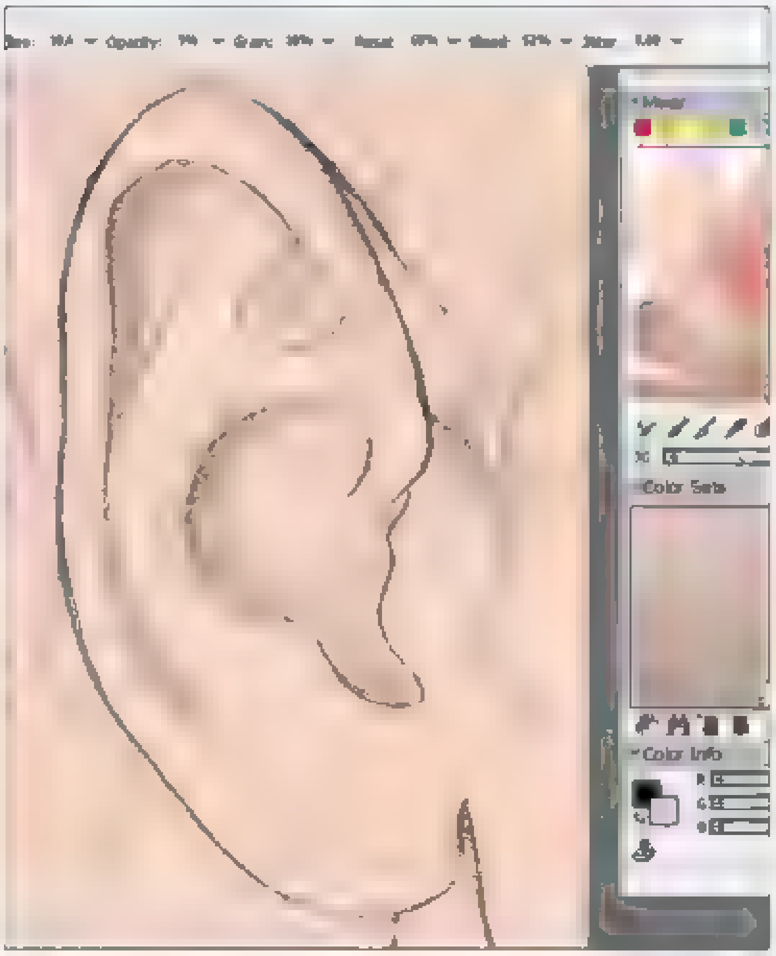
Now I sketch the general contour of the auricle, and draw the other parts of the ear in proportion. It's a common mistake to forget about the proportions, and the ear can look deformed as a result. While working on the auricle, I keep an eye on the thickness, form and character of the helix area.

I also think about perspective right from the beginning. To better show the volumetric form of an ear, I recommend you sketch its farther parts with lighter lines, and nearer ones with stronger lines.

The complexity of painting an ear specifically arises from the necessity to consider proportions, perspective, character, form, spatial depth, contrast and tints, as well as techniques and anatomy. You should be very attentive during the painting process.

The auricle's form

I scan my sketch and open Painter. When modelling the auricle's form, you must pay attention to the light source. It's important to preserve interrelation between the lines and tone. Lines around the form of the auricle are borders between the sections, which will have different levels of shadows and highlights. First, I paint the darkest areas of the form, then I can firm up the volume with the help of shadows and highlights. The correct shadows are vitally important to painting attractive ears.



Shadow work

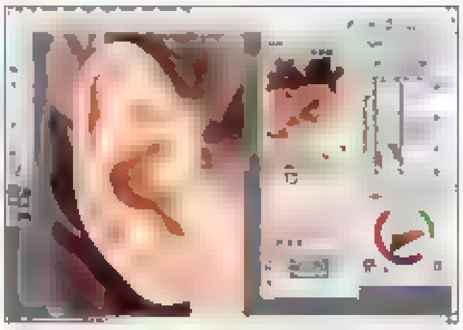
When working on the shadows, you should remember that falling shadows show not only the original form, but also the form of the surface on which they fall. Revealing some parts of the auricle, don't forget to coordinate one part with the others and with the general form. These rules should be observed strictly at all stages of work.

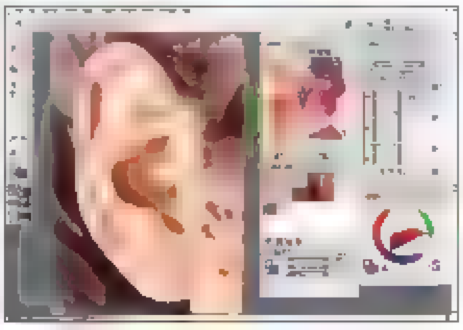
Let's work on the highlights next. You first need to mark the darkest and the lightest tones. I work with a big, soft brush to show the softness and roundness of the ear's forms.

Make sure that all the parts of the ear are coordinated and fit the overall image. The reflection's tone should not be stronger than the tone in the light. Contrasts of shadows and highlights that are deeper in the ear shouldn't stand out.

Artist PROFILE

[illegible]





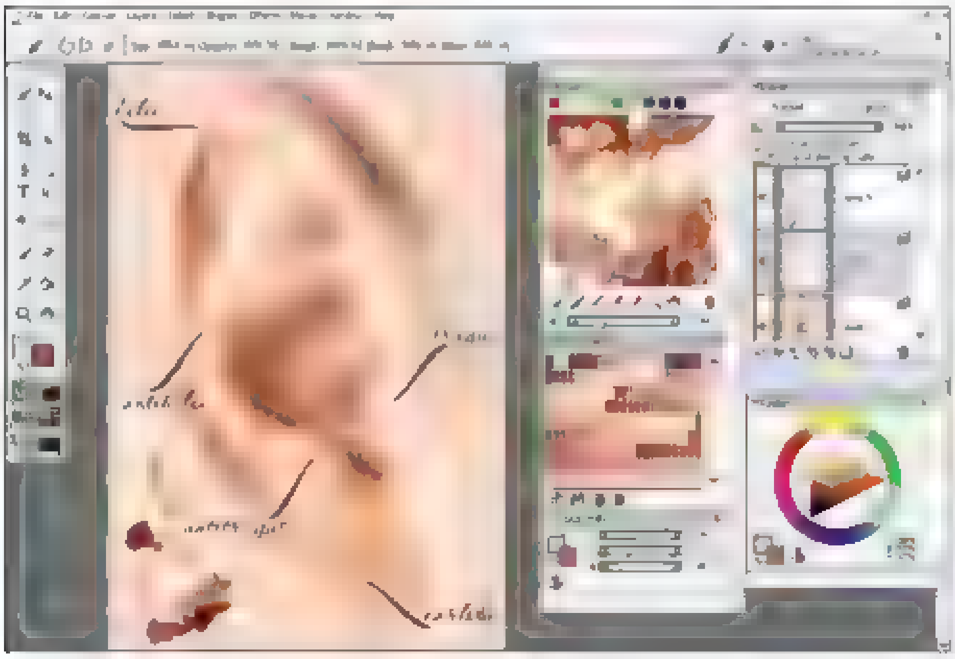
Enrich with tints

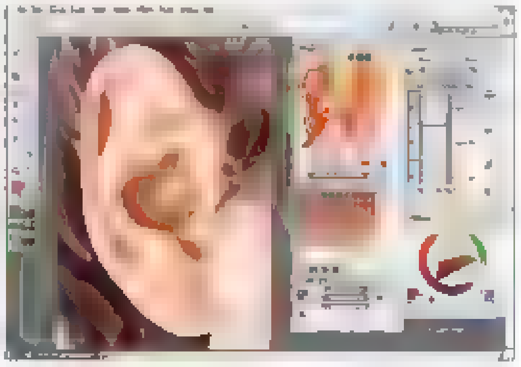
I add non-saturated lilac tints into the shadows of the deeper parts of the ear. After that I add cooler, non-saturated pink to the earlobe. I emphasise the cheekbone with highlights, to show the point where the ear is attached to the head. In the final stage of painting the auricle, you must give the painting a sense of completeness, to bring the separate components of the auricle together to a finished form.

Finishing touches

To finish the painting, I suppress excessively darkened sections and sharply outlined edges, as well as strengthening insufficiently outlined edges. I add a stroke of saturated pinkish-orange to the shadowy area of the ear between the antihelix and helix, then make the highlight on the edge of the curl brighter.

If the form is broken up into too many sections, unify it with consistent lighting. The lighting should uniformly fade as the source of light gets farther from the illuminated area. Don't make shaded parts too dark, so that they don't stand out. The parts in the foreground should be more precisely detailed than those in the background.





Artist
PROFILE

PAINTING THE LIPS

This expressive part of the face reflects the inner state of the person, and changes to show a range of emotions

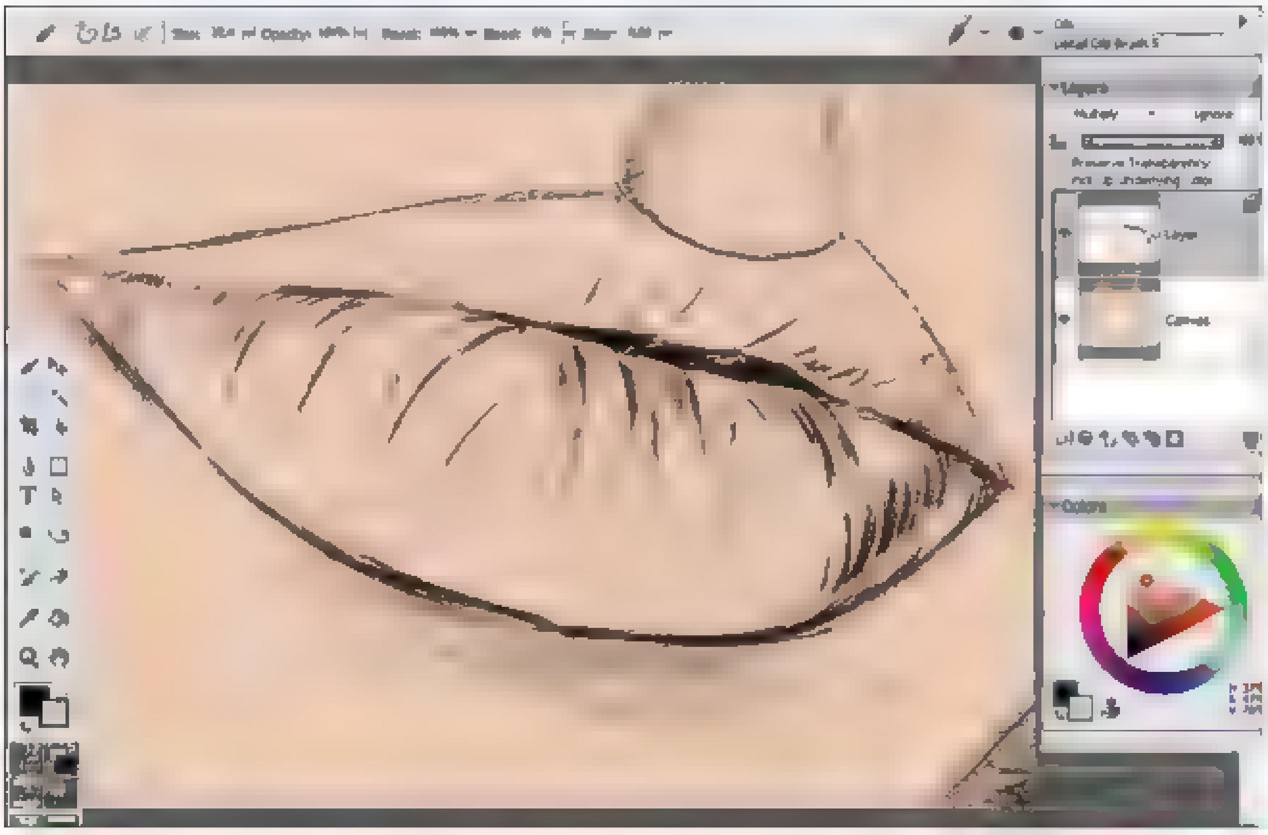
Painting beautiful, sexy, magical women is something I really enjoy – and beautiful lips make a woman's face even more alluring. An indicator of sexual attractiveness and sensuality, lips can be charming, tender and passionate

The size of a woman's lips plays an important role in her appearance. But lips are a notoriously difficult part of the face to paint, especially when working on a realistic-looking portrait. Most of my painted characters have plump, sensual lips. They usually have rich make-up, too I prefer to paint lips with red wine or coral lipstick. This attracts your attention to them and gives the face a degree of theatrical and decorative nuance

The mouth, like the eyes, defines the overall look of the face The mouth itself should be round. The upper and lower lips must have approximately the same fullness, and the cavity on the upper lip must have clear contours. The upper and lower lips should converge to one point in the corner

In my paintings, I often paint a form of the mouth with the upper lip smaller than the lower This adds an element of naivety, as well as sensuality to the look. If you want to make your subject's lips exciting and passionate, you simply give them more volume

It's necessary to know the structure of the lips before attempting to paint them. Lips have different forms, dependant on the specific features of that person's face, as well as nationality and race. But even with that great variety, all lips have a common structure Reference is important, as ever so study your own lips in the mirror before you start.



Start with a sketch

I'm going to paint in the three-quarter perspective, and I'll start with the general form of the mouth. I begin by lightly marking the position of the lips themselves, taking into account the proportions and perspective.

Then, using auxiliary lines, I define the general character of the mouth to fit the character in my painting. The upper lip protrudes forward relative to the lower lip. Therefore, since it catches more shadows, it's usually darker. The lower lip is usually lighter because its surface is turned upwards. It becomes darker closer to the edges of the mouth. Also, the upper lip's prominence adds plasticity and expressiveness to its middle part, as well as to the overall form.

I sketch the shadow on the lips, leaving the shiny areas in the middle of the lower lip and on the top upper lip contour. Then I add dark accents to the lips' corners.

Move to Painter

It's time to add some colour. I've chosen a saturated, cold pink for this example. I create a colour palette for painting the lips. Using shadows, I then begin to emphasise the volume of the lips. I impose a shadow under the lower lip, at the same time defining the chin. I add shadows to the right side of the picture because the light is coming in from the left in the portrait. Another thing to note is that the lips are slightly open. If you look closely, you'll notice that there's a tooth visible in the crack between the upper and the lower lips.

I add a significant amount of shade to the left part of the lower lip. You need to be careful here, though, because the shadow on the lips shouldn't be too sharp. Therefore, the method I use is to softly wash it away in order for the red wine colour to blend smoothly into the basic pink colours.

I've also added some highlights to the shiniest areas of the lower lip, which immediately add volume.

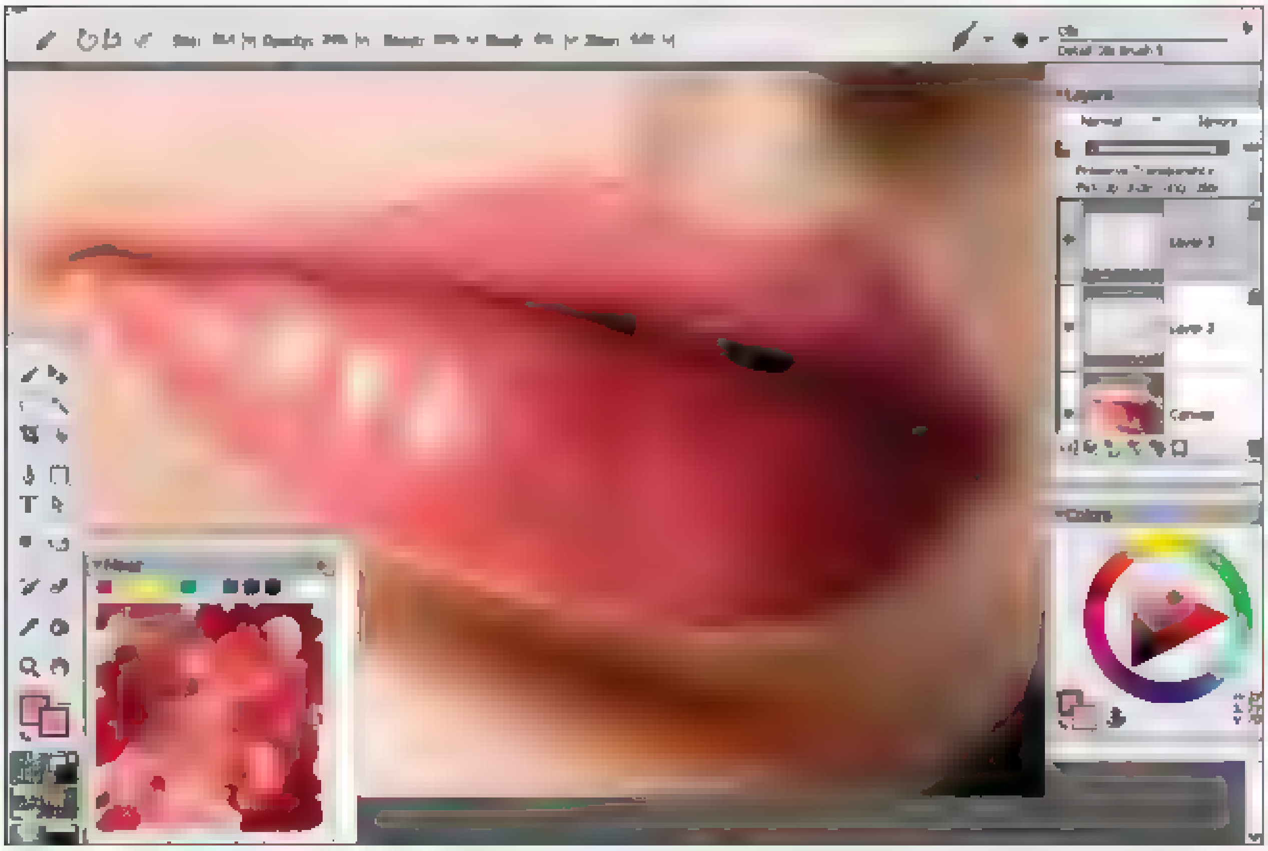
PRO SECRETS

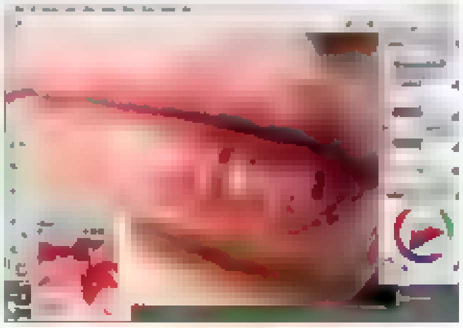
[illegible]

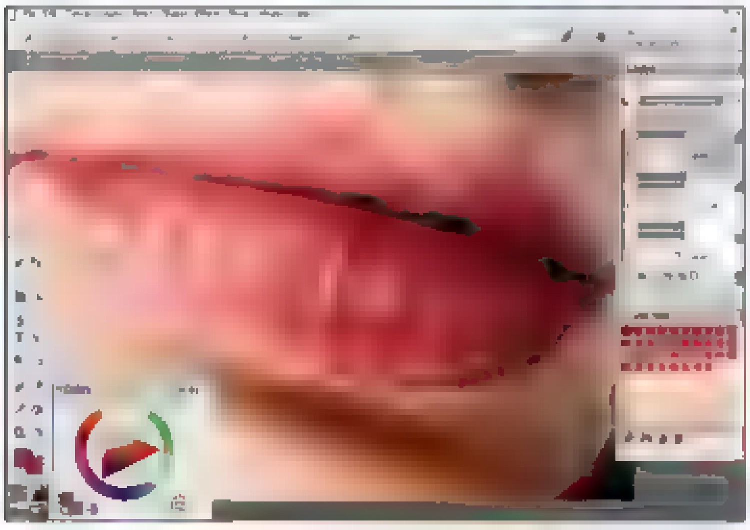
Stay soft

I avoid sharp lines and corners – lips have a soft form. Using a brush with high transparency, I apply the highlights all over the surface of the upper lip with small brush strokes. Besides the lips, I also paint the highlights around them. I add a colder, lilac-pink colour on the edge of the upper lip and under the lower lip, closer to the better-lit corner of the mouth. At this stage I work only with highlights. Using a large, soft brush, I paint a big stroke of light peach-pink colour on the lit side of the lower lip.

Then, using a soft brush of a smaller diameter, I paint brighter and finer light spots over the soft highlights. I use a mix of blue, peach and cold crimson. I've chosen a brush with some opacity for the lower lip and an almost transparent brush for the upper lip. It adds an effect of very gentle, dark pink highlights on the upper lip. I also add some soft highlights to the dark side of the lower lip and some more bright, sharp and noticeable highlights in the centre of the lower lip.







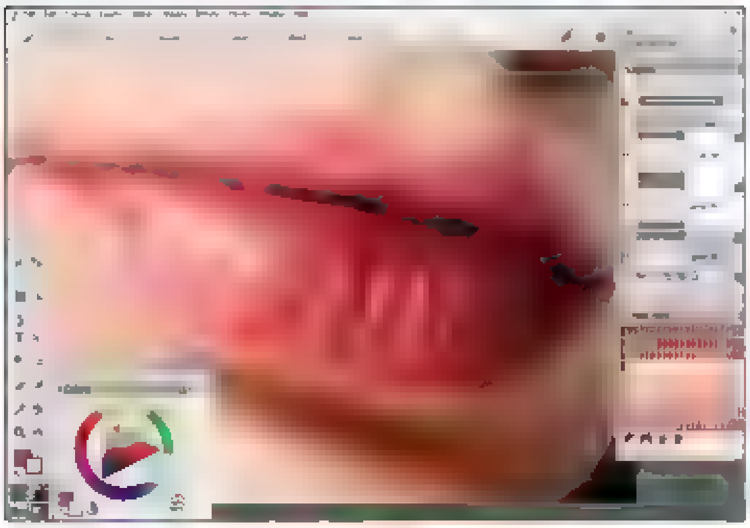
Corner shadows

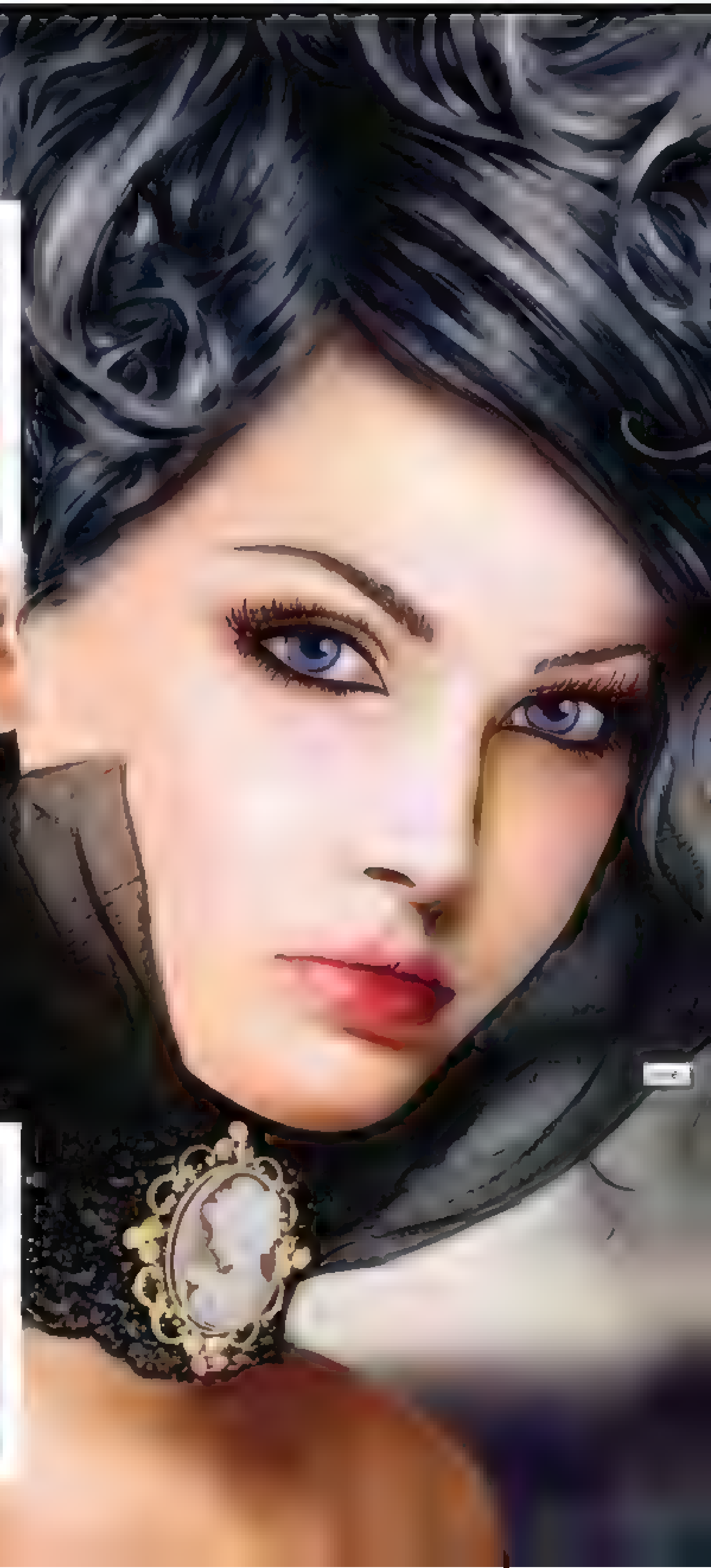
Now I paint in shadows at the corners of the mouth. I make them very light, but the lips would look plain and unnatural without them. I use dark coral and a small, soft brush with 30 per cent Opacity for painting the vertical folds on the lips.

Imagine the vertical lines that are passing through the surface of the lips: in their place paint several such folds – but not too many, or the lip will turn out wrinkled. Paint directly on highlights, breaking their form. I've painted fewer folds on the lower lip, but have made them sharper and more apparent.

Accents

At the final stage of painting, you should place the correct accents in your piece. What I try to do is emphasise the basic, thin contours of the lips' form. I create a new layer with Soft Light mode then, using the Airbrush, make several light strokes on the lips using a bright pink colour. This gives the lips a realistic flickering, shining effect.





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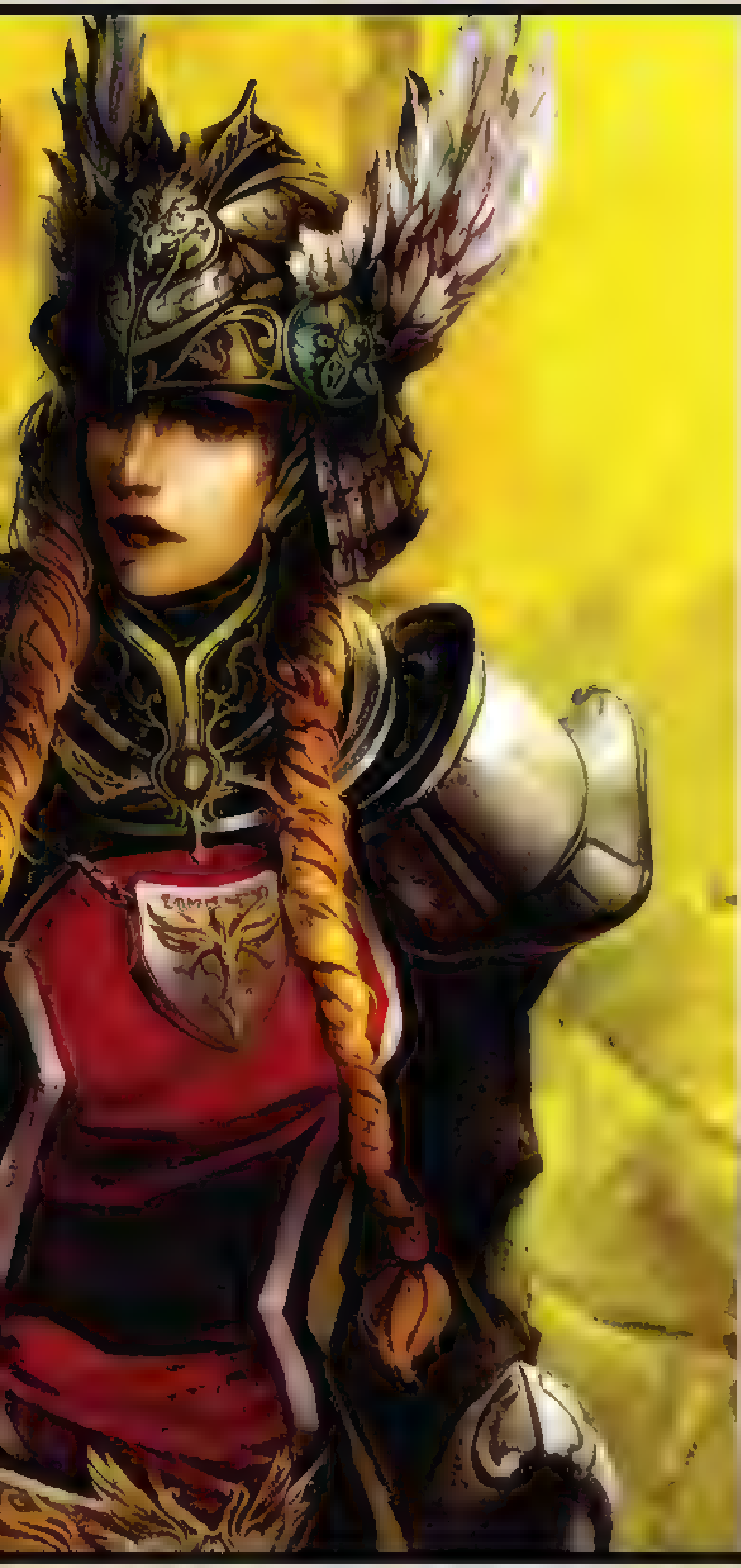
Harnessing heroines

How to develop your female character design skills

> “Your goal is to decide what kind of personality your character will have”
>
> Lorland Chen, page 46

Workshop files are on your disc



Your guide to creating heroines

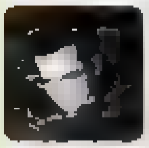
How do you convey an attitude in your painting? To harness the heroine in your character capture an expression that shows her courage and create a pose that says she's ready for action. Bring out the warrior in your women with our two workshops

Svetlin Velinov creates a determined dragon princess. Turn to page 52

Workshops

How to design heroic characters

46 Capturing warrior spirit with Lorland Chen
Paint a mythical valkyrie who embodies courage and femininity.



52 Representing courage with Svetlin Velinov
Create a dragon princess whose gentleness makes her invincible.

Photoshop & Painter

FLIGHT OF THE VALKYRIE

Lorland Chen [illegible] how he creates his beautiful images

Artist PROFILE

Lorland Chen
COUNTRY: China

Lorland Chen has worked as a fantasy artist for game and [illegible] companies as well as teaching at [illegible] Academy of Fine Art in Sichuan Province, China. He now spends most of his time working as a freelancer. [illegible]

On the disc
Find workshop files and screenshots in the Valkyrie folder inside the Heroic folder

Many people think that digital techniques will replace traditional art. Some people have even told me they've already thrown their pencils and brushes away. And it's in the arena of fantasy art that the graphics tablet has most often replaced traditional methods.

But we should ask ourselves one essential question: what makes so many complex lines and colours become a wonderful piece of art? Obviously, it's your creative vision, not your knowledge of software. So I recommend you improve your level of traditional art if you truly want to create your best work.

This main character is a valkyrie, the maid of Odin in Norse mythology. She collects the brave souls of fallen heroes to prepare for the final war. The gentleness of a girl and the strength of a man are combined in her face.

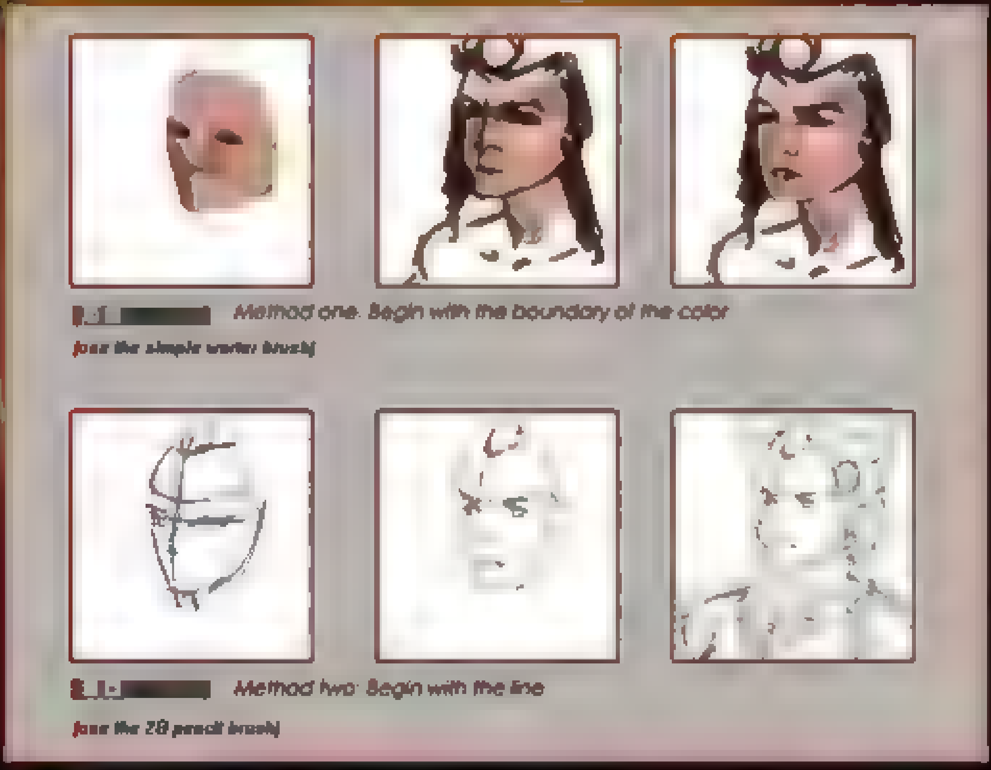
I completed this piece using Photoshop and Painter. This piece is like an oil painting. After you've read this workshop, you'll see I use the simplest methods from the beginning to the end, but still get an exciting result.

1 Start off on the right foot

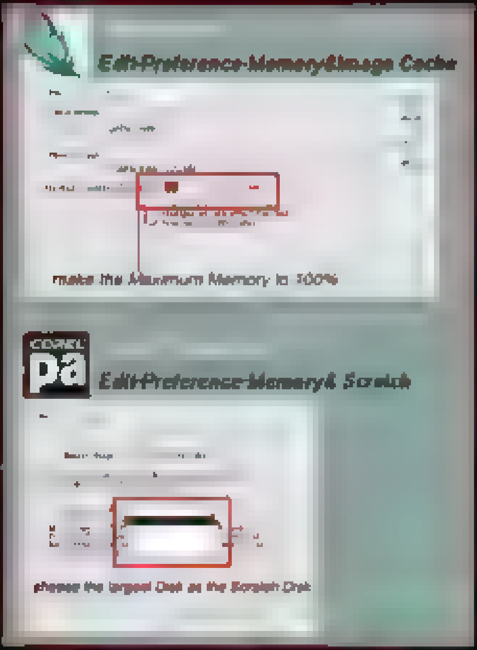
I'm thinking that my character should be beautiful, brave, and a little bit spiritual. To begin with, I do some research to help me get an idea of how she should look, the weapons she'd use, and so on. Gradually, an image falls into place. At this stage, I usually make several sketches. If people saw them, they'd probably think: "Oh, what a mess!" They wouldn't be able to tell what they were. But to my eyes, they're enough to guide me in drawing the shape, the colour and even the composition. Once this is clear in my mind, I throw the sketches away and begin the CG process.

The basic principle of a CG design is not just to copy how a person or animal physically looks in the real world. Your primary goal is to decide what kind of personality your character will have. Once you've done this, think about the body shapes that will reflect this personality, then choose suitable poses. You need to add personality to the whole figure. Here I use a pressure-sensitive drawing tablet.

What next? Sometimes I'll start by working on colour, at other times by working on lines. I don't think it matters which you start with: the important thing is to know where you're going. In this case, I start with the lines. I do the basic shape using a 2B pencil in Painter. Then I use a bigger brush with low opacity for shadows and highlights to specify the light direction.


Method one: Begin with the boundary of the color
(use the simple water brush)

Method two: Begin with the line
(use the 2B pencil brush)

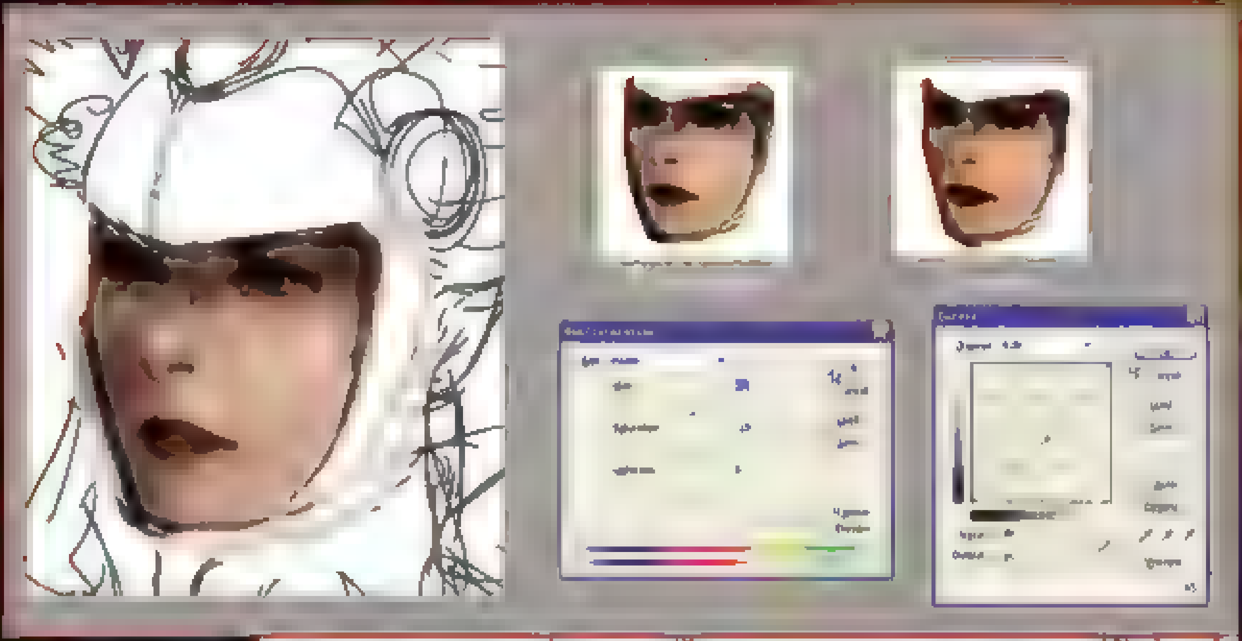


Edit-Preference-Memory&Image Cache

make the Maximum Memory to 100%

Edit-Preference-Memory& Scratch

choose the largest Disk as the Scratch Disk



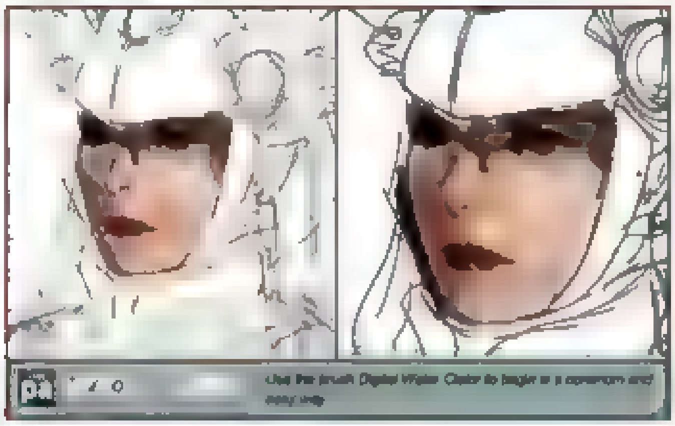
2 Software options

Which software do I prefer for creating digital artwork? Photoshop and Painter both have their strengths and weaknesses. I don't think it matters a great deal, as long as your computer can cope with the demands the software makes on your operating system.

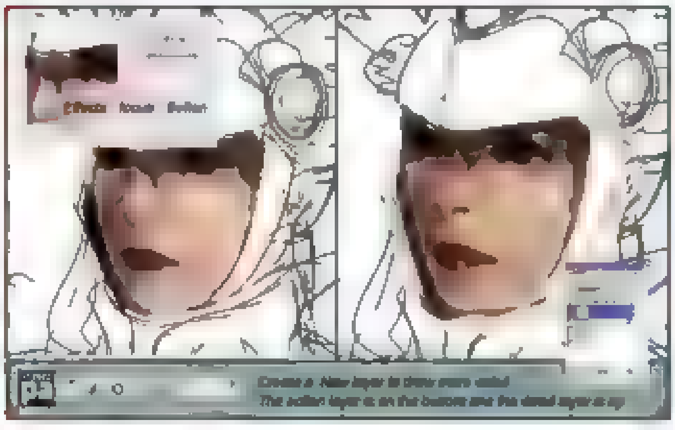
To save time and improve efficiency, make sure you optimise your system – you can get software to do this for you. In both Photoshop and Painter, use the preferences to set the Scratch Disk and allocate some more memory.

3 The face

I use Painter to colour the picture. For the main colour, I choose a few light browns and yellows. I blur the main colour and create a new layer to show more detail but adjust the Opacity to around 60 per cent for the complementary colour shade.

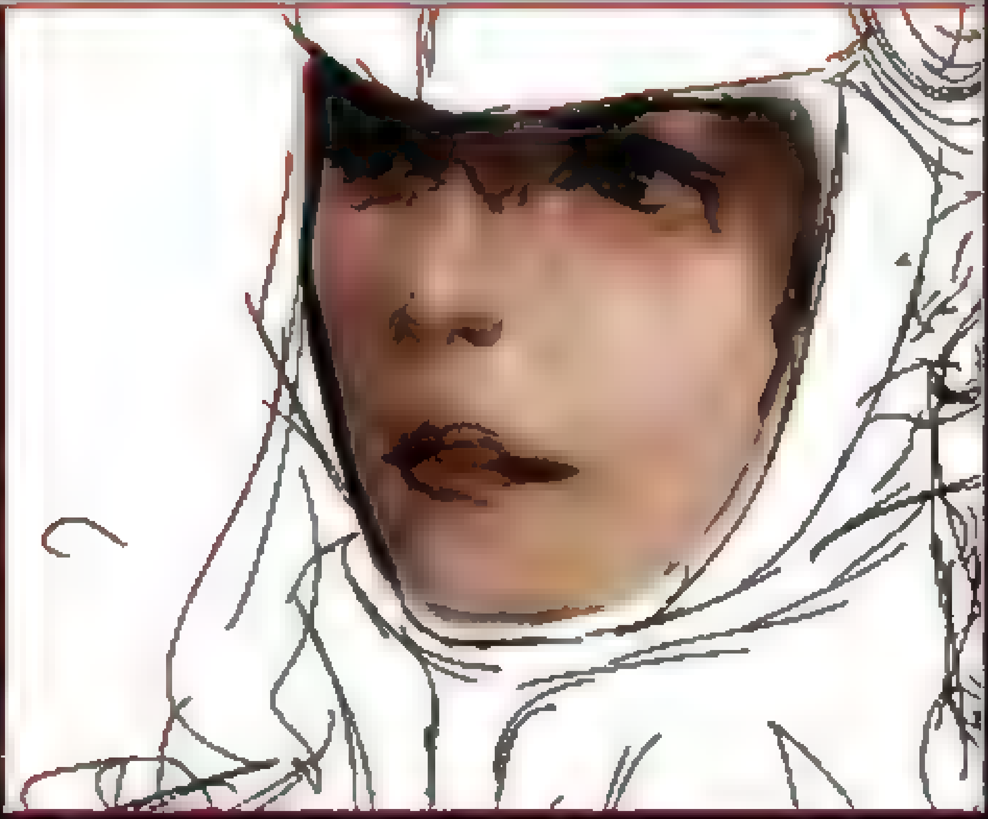


Use the brush Digital Water Color to begin in a common and easy way



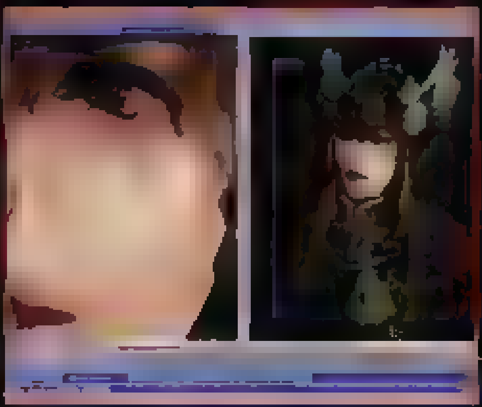
Create a New layer to draw more detail

The colour layer is on the bottom and the detail layer is up



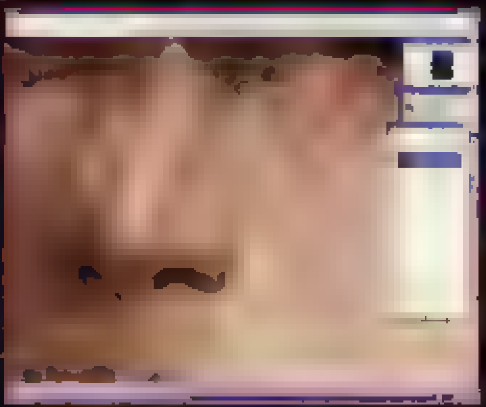
4 Clear things up

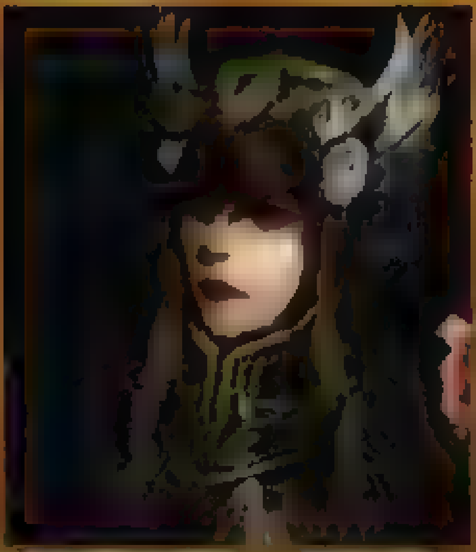
Now I transfer the image over to Photoshop to clean it up. First I adjust Saturation and Curves to get more contrast in the face. Then I use a brush to depict the eye socket, the nose and the corners of the mouth.



5 Emphasise the shape

I zoom in the piece and work on the facial features in more detail. I select a smaller brush to add finer detail. What I'm trying to do here is to bring out the shapes and forms of the face. Try to visualise each face you paint as a three-dimensional object.

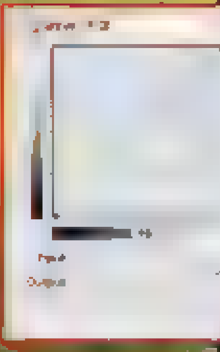


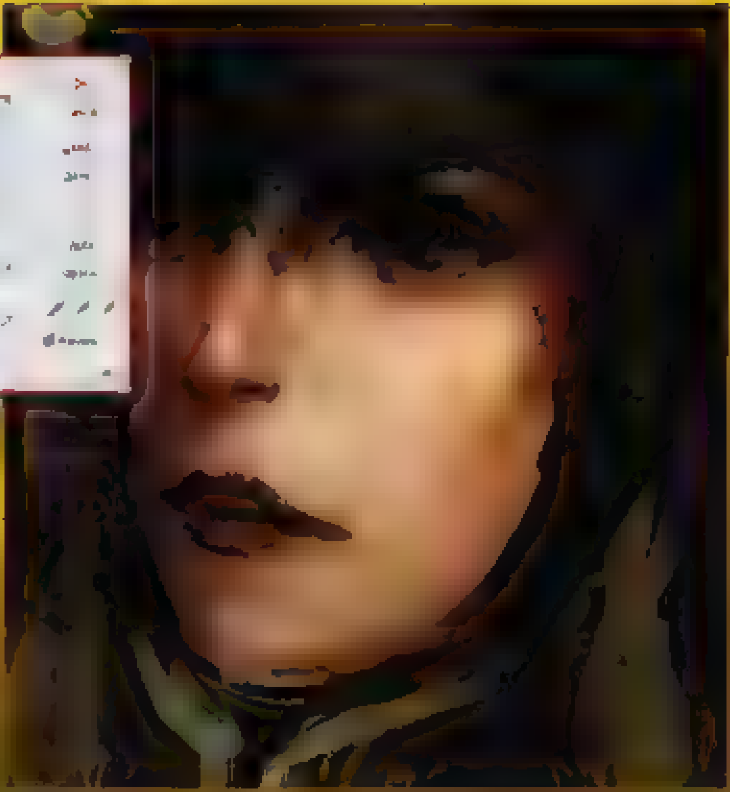


PRO SECRETS

RIFF format is special

If you use the [illegible] brush, remember to save the file as the RIFF format, otherwise you won't be able to work on the picture with this brush again. When you've finished your work, I'd recommend saving it as a TIFF.





6 Add detail to the face

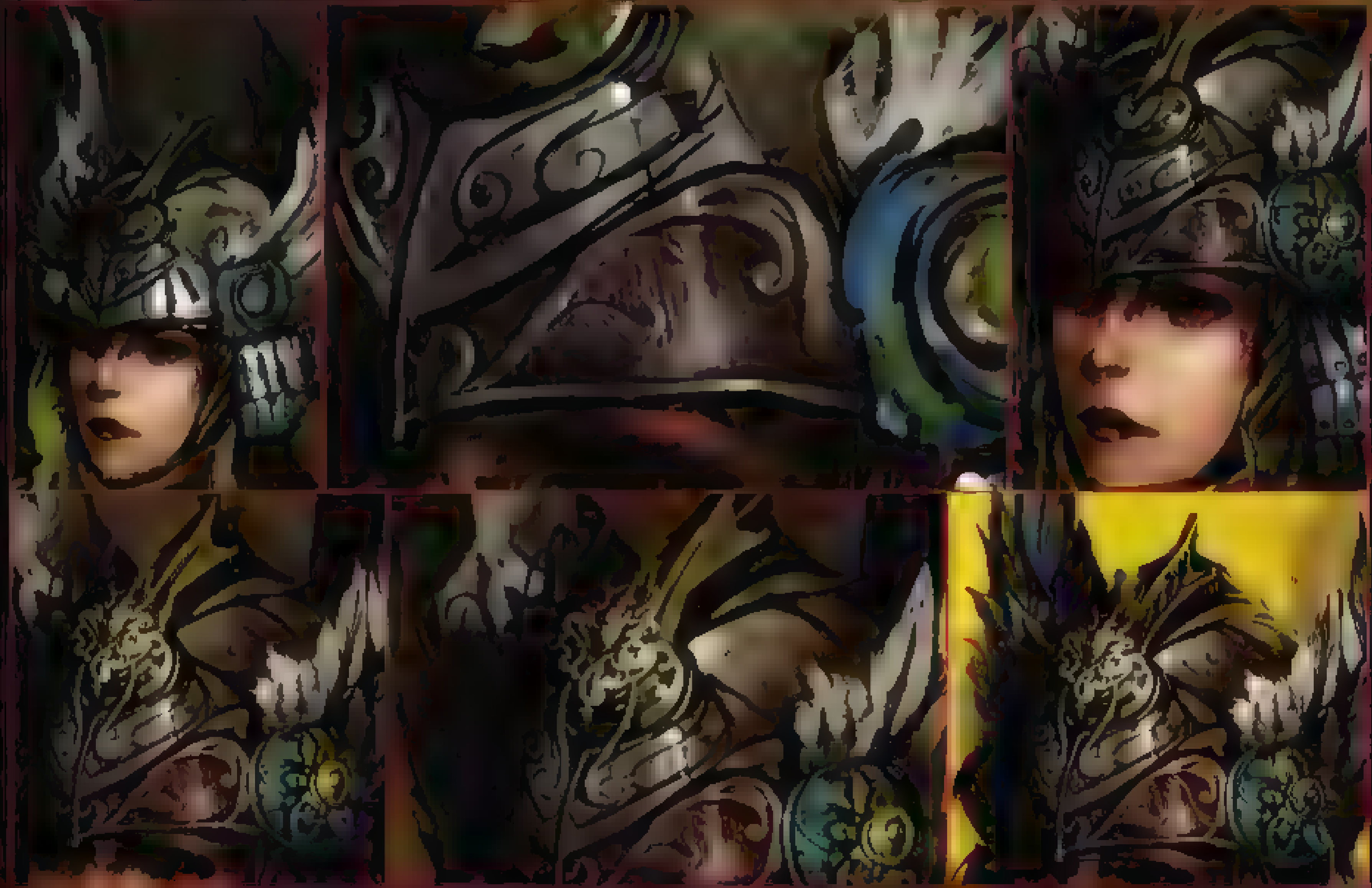
You can create complex work with simple brushes. I use two in Photoshop: the Airbrush with a clear edge and the Airbrush with a blurred edge.

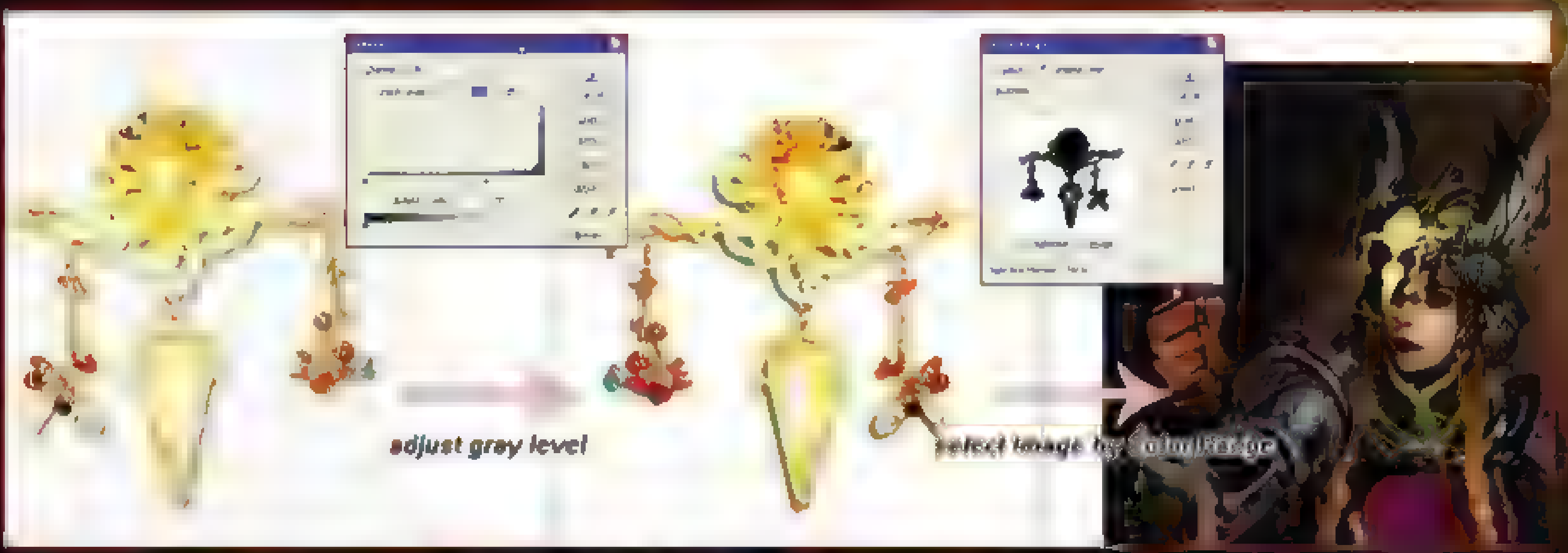
7 Add texture to the face

Detail makes a face more lifelike. I want to make my character's skin look more natural, so I paste in a photo of a model with perfect, clear skin to create a texture. I adjust the layer to Overlay and control the Curves down. When you clean up the superfluous material, a nice face emerges.

8 The helmet

I add a shining metal helmet to show the valkyrie's bravery. Adding some colour roughly and then painting [illegible] the objects one by one, then finish by dealing with the edges. If you want to make your painting clear and easy to understand, you need to pay attention to the edges. Don't treat them as all the same; some are contrasted clearly and some are blurry. I combine different browns, yellows and reds to create the helmet. Using a variety of colours creates contrast within the object, which in turn produces a feeling of depth.





9 Materials

Using decent materials is the key to a good result, especially when dealing with complex objects. Here I'm using a photo of jewellery, carefully selecting it from the background using the Colour Range dialog (Select>Color Range).

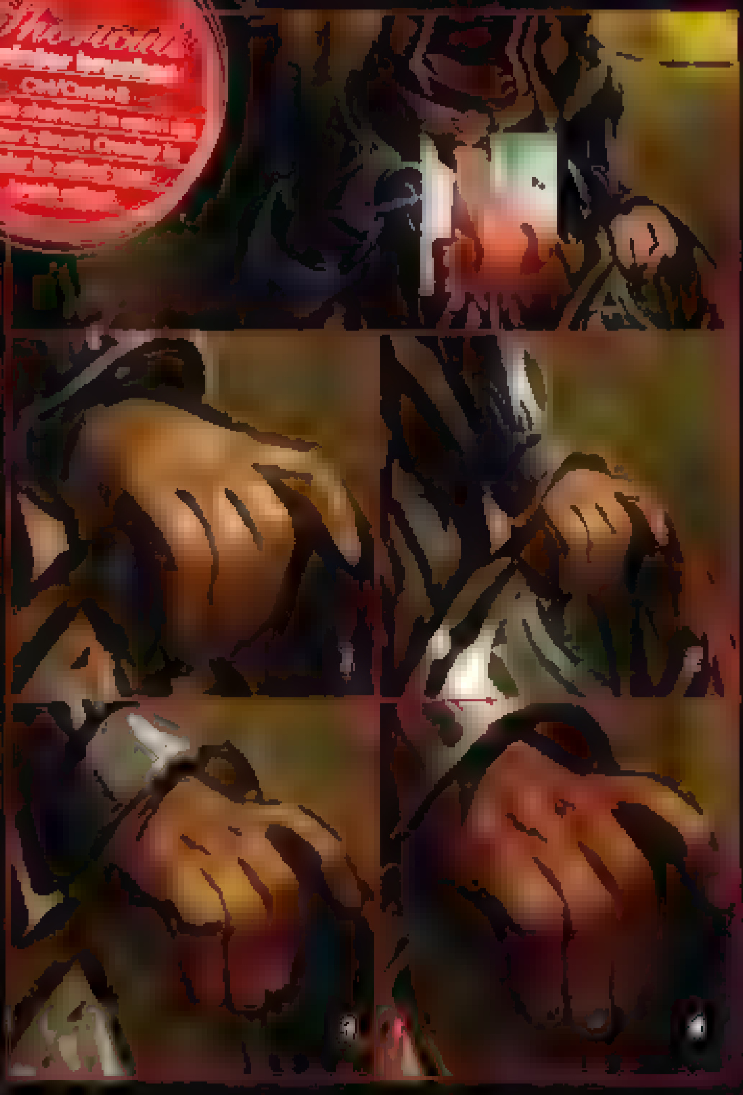
10 The right hand

The hand is a complicated object, and you need to get the shadows exactly right to make it look natural. If you find drawing hands difficult, use a photo as a guide. I've taken a photo of my own hand to use here. A model can help you with the basic pose, the perspective and even the colour. Take photographs in a pose similar to the sketch, and adjust the colour in Photoshop using Curves (Ctrl/Cmd+M) and Color Balance (Ctrl/Cmd+B). Finally, use the brushes to make the contrast clear, emphasise the light and so on.

11 The left hand

I find left hands more difficult than right hands. I take several photos and choose the one that appears in the correct perspective. Using your photographic reference, you need to give this hand edges and shape. To make the background to the hand look natural, the colour of the hand should look natural against its environment; the light reflected from the hand should come from the same direction as light reflected elsewhere; and the style of the hand should be in keeping with the style of the picture in general.

Shortcut
Colour balance
Ctrl/Cmd+B
[illegible]



12 The wand

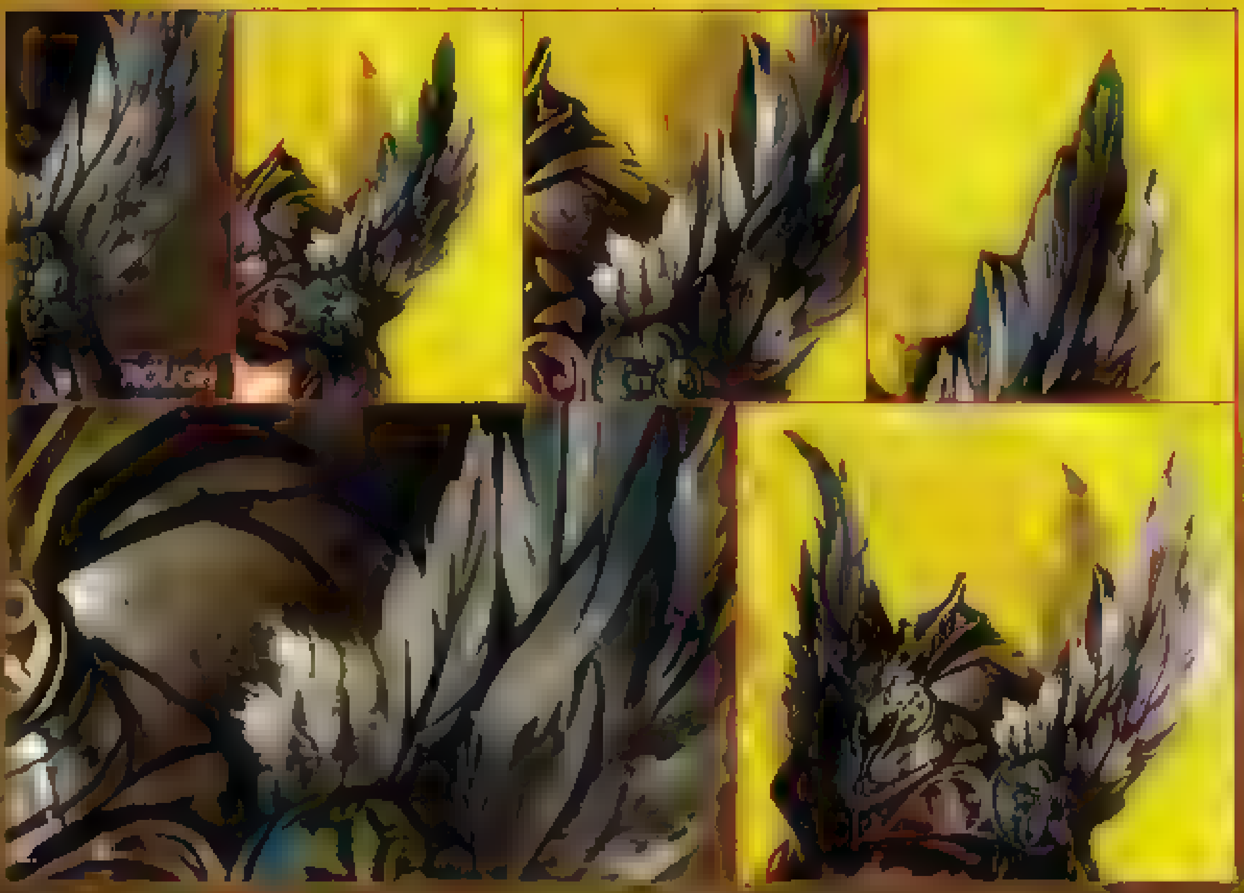
I give the valkyrie a wand to lend her a feeling of dignity and power. It's a very thin object – which is the kind of thing I'm not so fond of drawing, to be honest. First I use the Polygonal Lasso Tool to select an area, then I fill it in with the Paint Bucket Tool. The Gradient Tool's excellent for getting the right effect here. Finally, I use the Brush Tool to get the fine detail as I want it.

13 The shield

The creation of the shield begins with a rough sketch. First, I shape the style of shield with a big, strong brush then go over the edge with a much thinner one. It will look like the big strokes are put together by thousands of small strokes. Painting the flower pattern that's sculpted on the shield isn't as easy as it looks, and the shield must fit in with the left hand naturally. But I get there in the end. The centre area of the shield is made of gold and decorated with a metallic flower pattern. The gold is made up of many different colours – yellows, reds, even greens. I blend the colours in a way that could be compared to oil painting techniques.

14 The feather

Okay, here comes the last step – painting a cluster of feathers. This is something I'm pretty good at. On some parts, I use a high-saturation colour to paint. Following the correct light direction, I light up the top of the cluster and make the boundary of dark and light a colourful area.



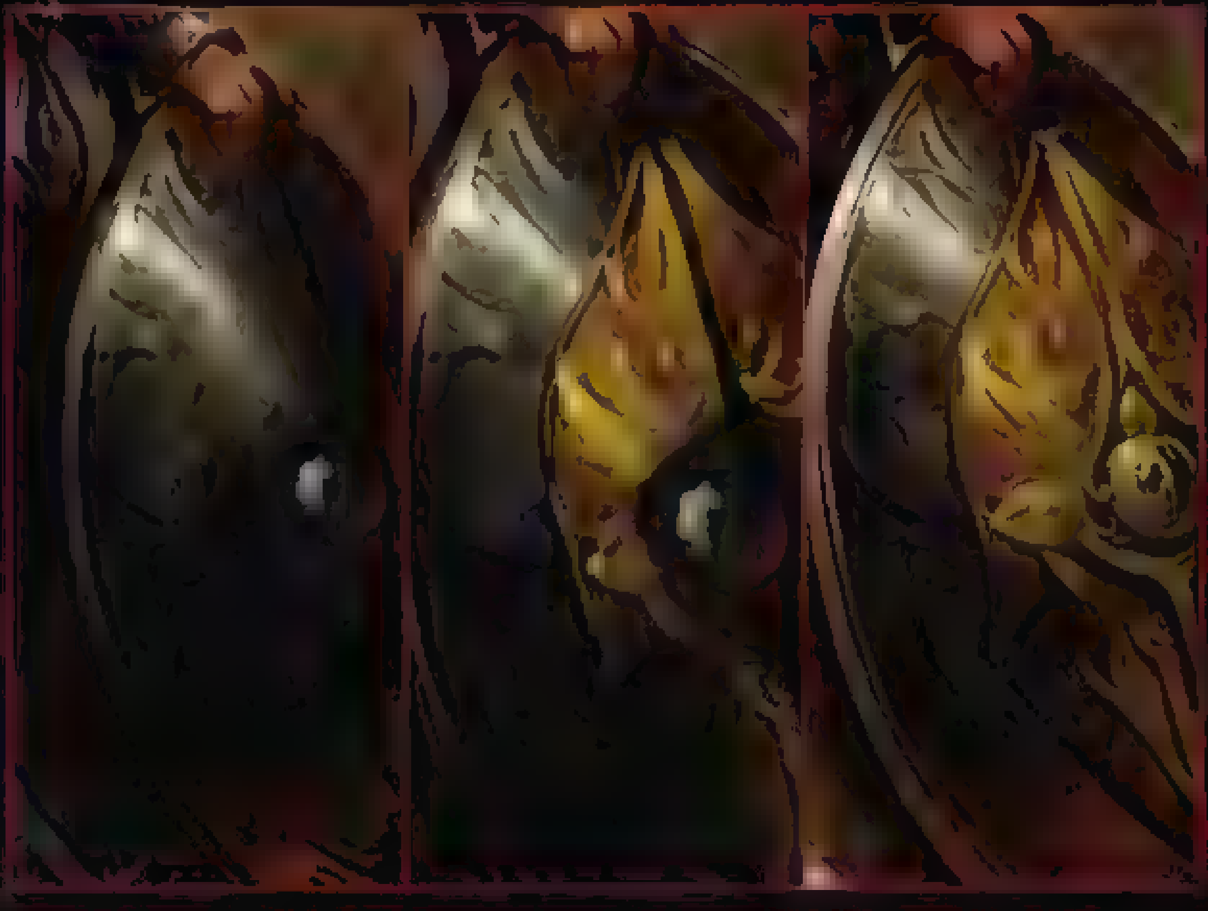
PRO SECRETS

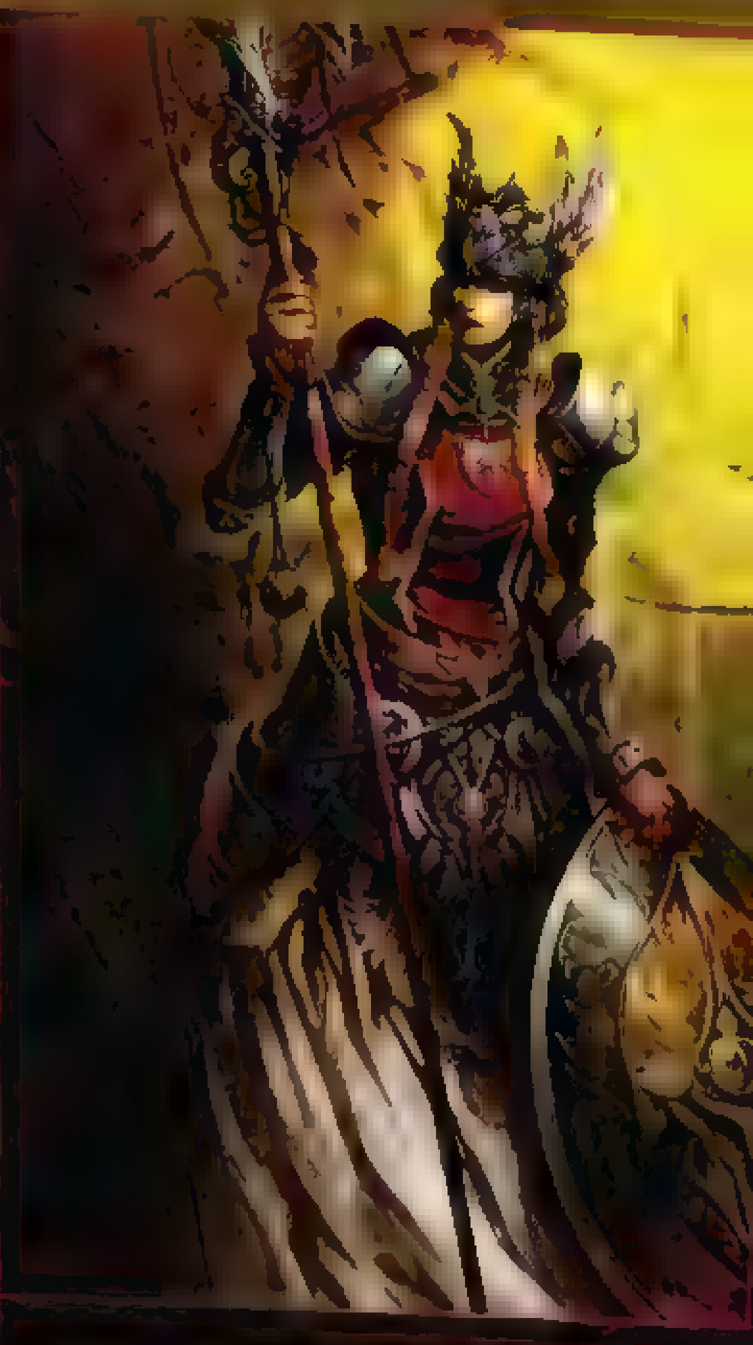
Use photos as texture

Many people use photos when drawing CG pictures. A good texture should be natural in the object. Use a suitable layer property: Multiply, Overlay or Soft Light, and blur the photo layer by two or three pixels before flattening.

15 The end

Finished! The result – a beautiful and dignified valkyrie. She has great elegance and the bravery to guard the gate of Odin's palace. I'm crazy about her. I wish I had a bodyguard like this – what about you?





THE DRAGON PRINCESS

Svetlin Velinov demonstrates how to draw an heroic character while retaining an air of mystery

PROFILE

[illegible]

[illegible]

A [illegible] The key to the creation [illegible]

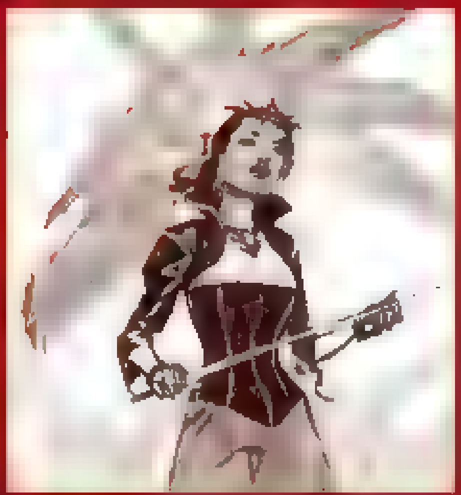
[illegible]

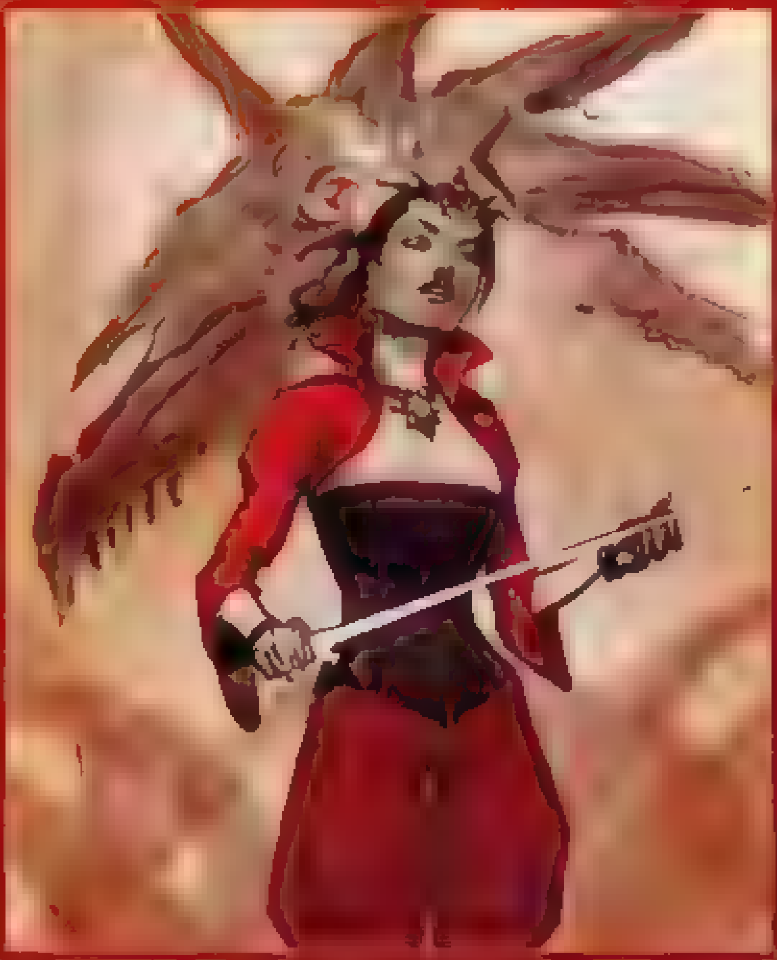
Every character I draw has a mystery [illegible]

All of this had to be contrasted with a no[illegible] typical environmen[illegible] I soon have several keystones; a beautiful heroine, a dragon, fire and colour. Now I can sort out the relationship between the elements of my composition, and settle on the colours. I decide to put her in the middle of the flames, making her strong and invincible, in control of her situation. This puts the dragon in a subordinate position, because his most powerful weapon is fire [illegible]

Base sketch and image composition

I briefly mark out a sketch. I don't like working through sketches: I prefer working directly with colour. I start with a silhouette, built using a standard hard-edged brush with Spacing set to 2. I set the blending mode for the layer to Multiply. Once the form is more or less [illegible] I zoom out and work on the volume with the lighter shades, before making a final decision on the lighting [illegible]





[illegible]

Creating the colour conception

A very important stage in creating your artwork is to decide which colour solution is best for that particular painting. The first thing that comes to mind with a dragon is fire. Fire is warm, and I decide to give it a real red colour, which has the added bonus that red is also a natural sign of danger. This, combined with the innocent but determined expression of the princess, makes for an interesting piece. Through the vibrancy and the richness of colour, I want to insert some dynamics and tension into the seemingly static composition [illegible]

Decorative elements

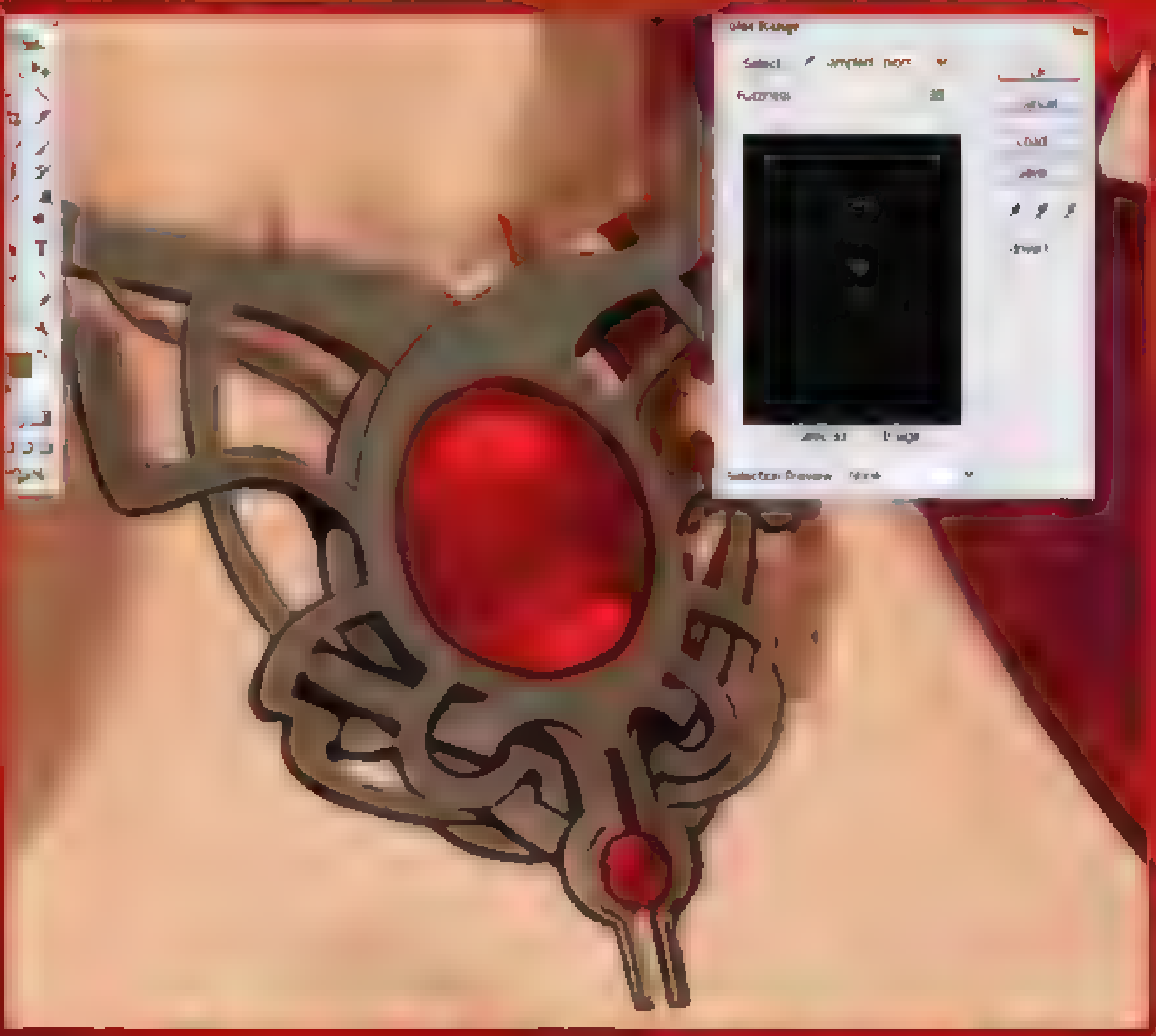
Accessories and other supporting elements strengthen the impact of your character. I've chosen ornaments that combine organic elements, interwoven with mechanics and the coldness of metal. I want the jewellery to have a dimmed and matted look.

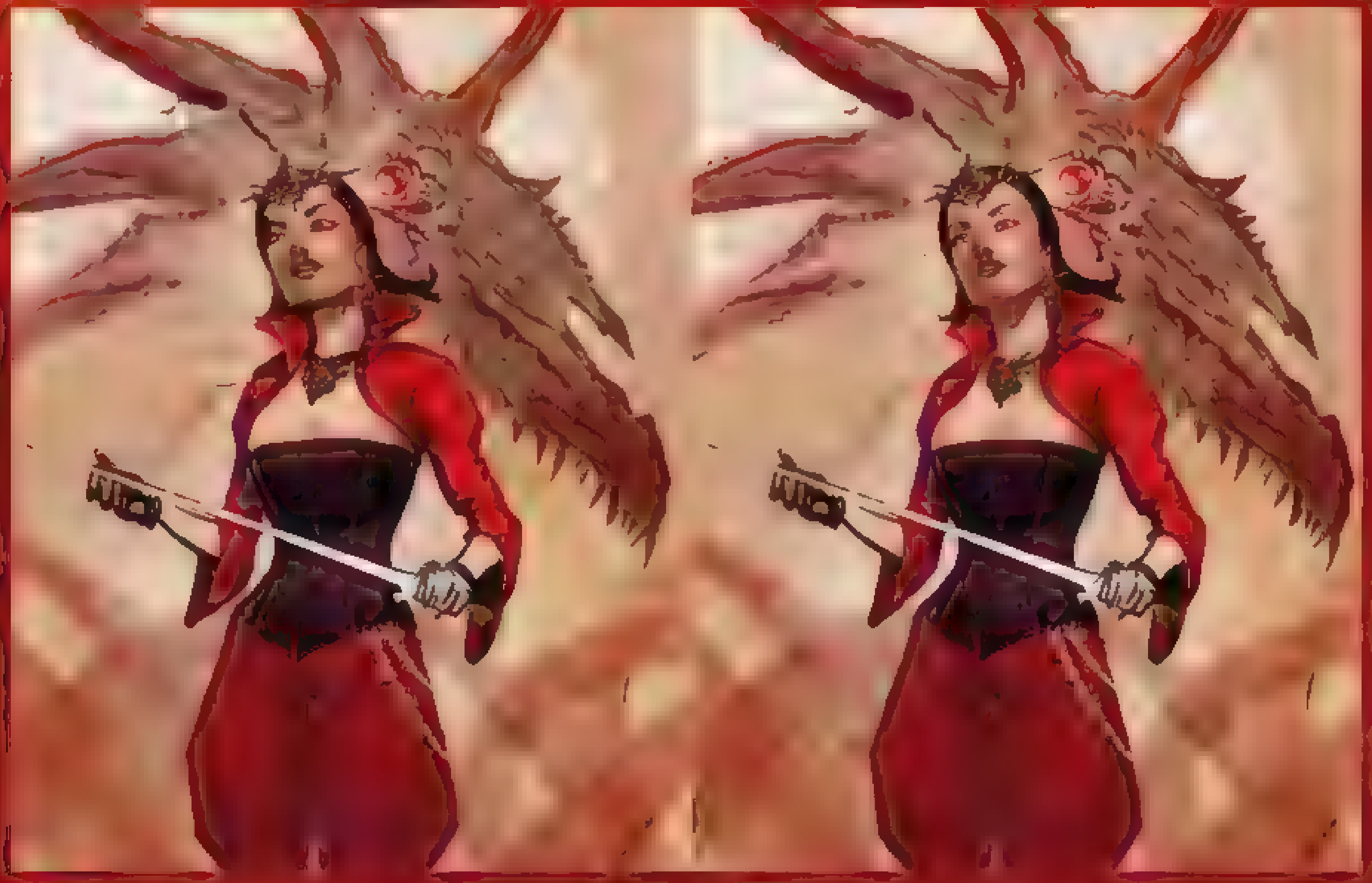
Now I'm going to start building volumes, because the colour is flat at the moment. To ensure that I only paint the areas I want to, I use the Color Range function, limited to a certain colour or halftone.

For the links of the chains running from her waist, I use a custom brush that I've made myself. With some adjustments to spacing, direction and angle, I produce a chain that fits my princess perfectly.

Solving a headache

I flip the canvas to check for any problems, and realise there's something wrong with the head. I've distorted the whole skull and mixed up its geometry. There are areas I have to cut and others I have to fill. The eye sockets are distorted and don't fit the direction and the tilt of the head. The tiara isn't right either, so I have to work on this too.





Repeating elements

I've repeated some elements in different parts of the painting. The round red stones in many locations are a direct reference to the eye of the dragon. This is a necessary element, which was embedded from the initial sketch. Now the clothes are starting to look re

Changing the dragon

There are certain things irritating me. It takes me a while to work it out, but then I crack it: the dragon is way too close to the princess's head, and the huge stone on her tiara is almost on the same line as the eye of the dragon, which leads to a conflict between the two.

I haven't done much work on the dragon yet. I now think about moving him up and to the left, but the canvas appears a bit narrow for this. To the side, the dragon is touching the outer border and the horns need to be cut. I rearrange the whole format and enlarge the canvas by a couple of centimetres to find the optimal layout.

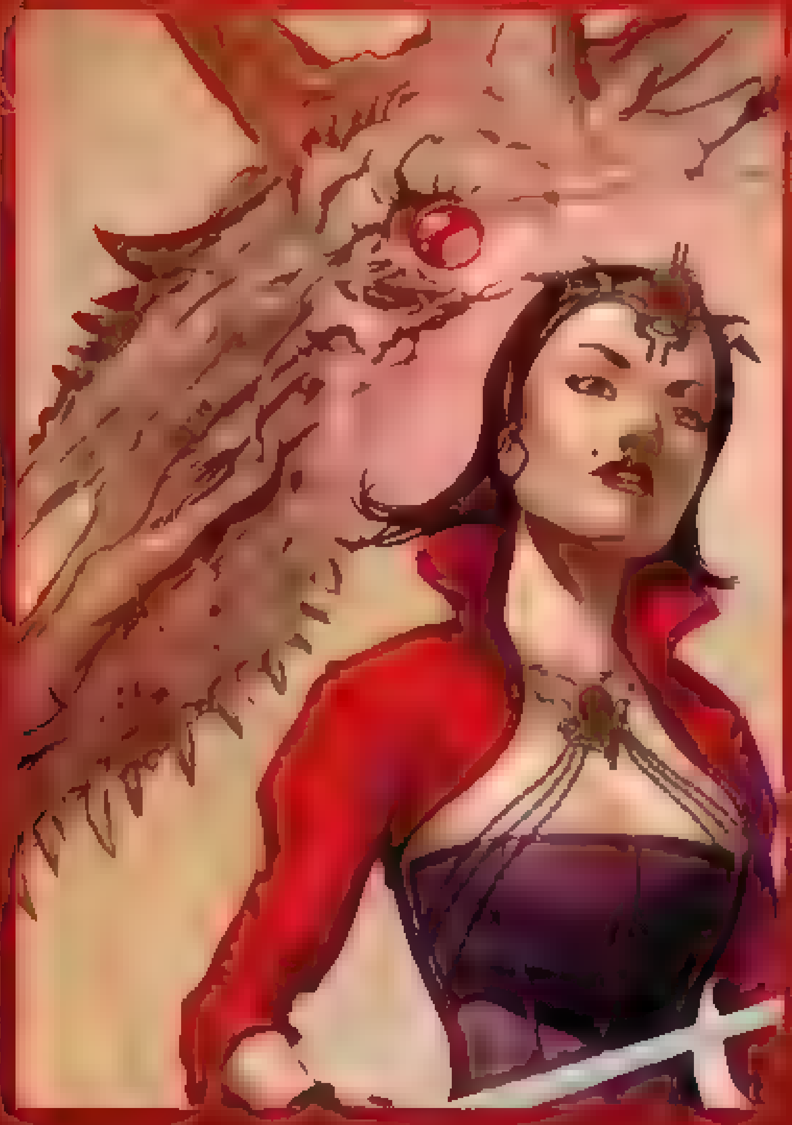
After tweaking the tiara some more, everything's good with the face, I add some more decorative chains, and so the character begins to look more like what I had in mind when I sketched the piece.

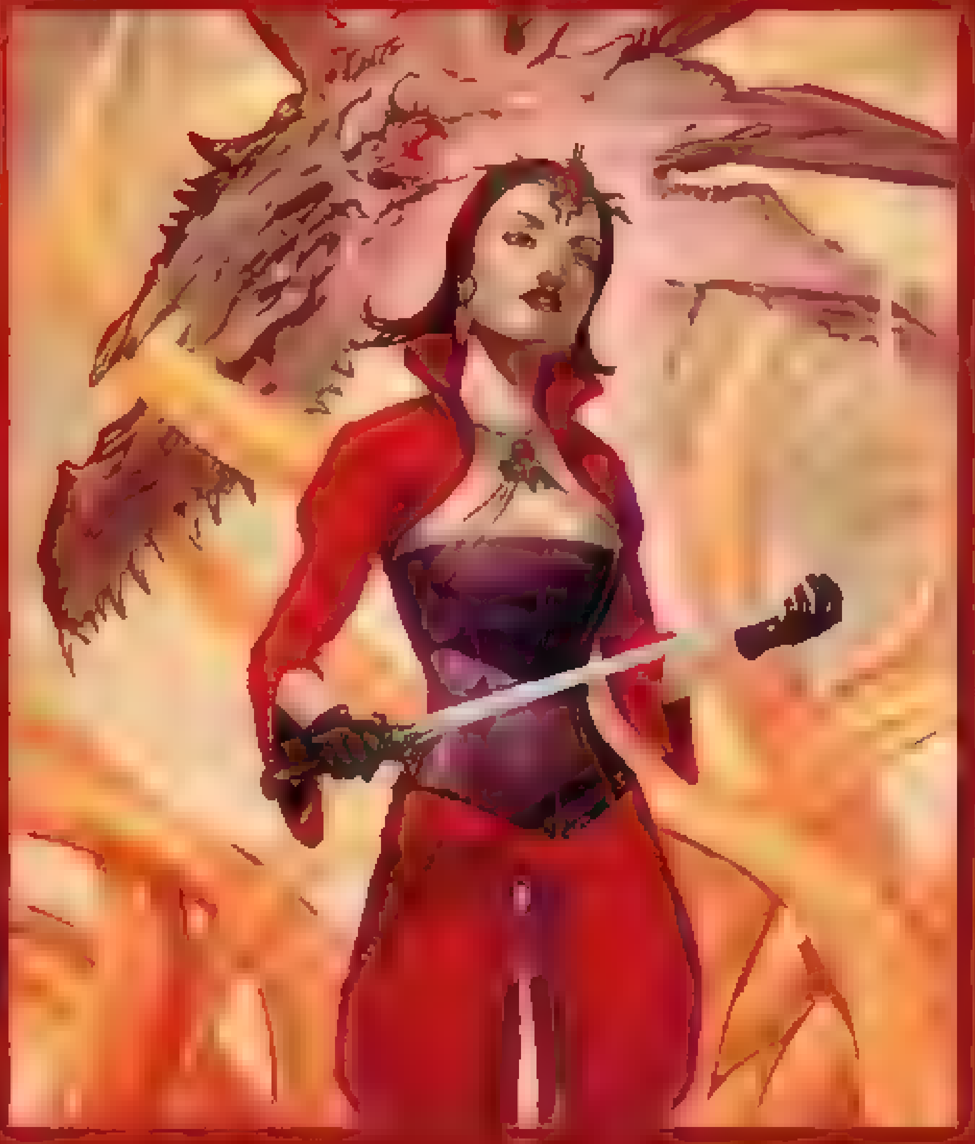
7 Fire

I need to make the foreground elements stand out more from the background. For this, I need an element to add value and hierarchy to the composition elements. I need to work on my fire.

My initial idea is to put the princess in stylised flames that don't burn her. This could help me to separate off the dragon, while adding values to the front and background. I decide to further develop the idea by continuing the flames upwards, so they wrap and envelop the dragon. If the flames are behind the princess, and at the same time in front of the dragon, this will separate the background, giving the composition depth.

I don't want these flames to look like ordinary fire; I want something more like a stream or a draft, but controlled and subdued by the power of thought. I make a custom brush, with a gradient at 90 degrees from black to translucent. With Direction turned on from the Settings panel, the gradient follows the movement path or flips, dependent on the swing of the brush. Together with the foreground/background colour switch (press X), this makes the whole process of building the volume easy.





8 Accessories

[illegible] the accessories. Her jewellery is [illegible] between living form and metal, a part of the princess. I look for a definitive symbolism and association. I want to show the strength of the princess's spirit [illegible] the burning might of the fire and synthesised in the jewels' ornaments. [illegible] look complete. I start working on the speculars and shadows. Once I've made one element, I have the look, the vision and the model to proceed with the rest.

PRO SECRETS

[illegible]

PRO SECRETS

[illegible]

Clothing

Next, I turn my attention to the clothing, which is still a little dry and flat. I have to bring it to life by adding specularity and shadows, and I also want to put it inside the environment by adding some shine.

This moment is delicate: in the desire to do all this, I could break the form beneath the clothes. The creases have to help underline the structure beneath, by following the anatomical forms and adding to their volume.

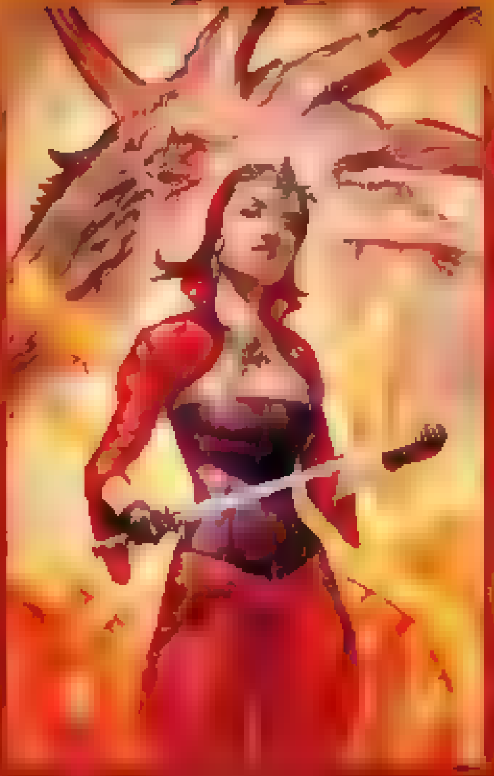
10 Texturing

I'm going to add some texture to the jewellery. I use Overlay mode and make a clipping mask. There are two ways to create a clipping mask: through a shortcut (Ctrl+Alt+G or Cmd+Option+G) or by holding down the Alt/Option button and clicking between the layers you want to work on. Then simply make a layer mask and retouch the places of the texture that you want to sink back. In this way, I add texture to the metal parts and the corset, giving them a more convincing look.

11 Final accent

Time for some more work on the flames – mainly on the idea of wrapping them around the dragon in a way that separates him from the foreground. The flames themselves are separated on a different layer in order for me to work with each one individually, because the fire actually wraps around itself as well. With the help of a mask I retouch the parts that I want to disappear and slightly blur the edges.

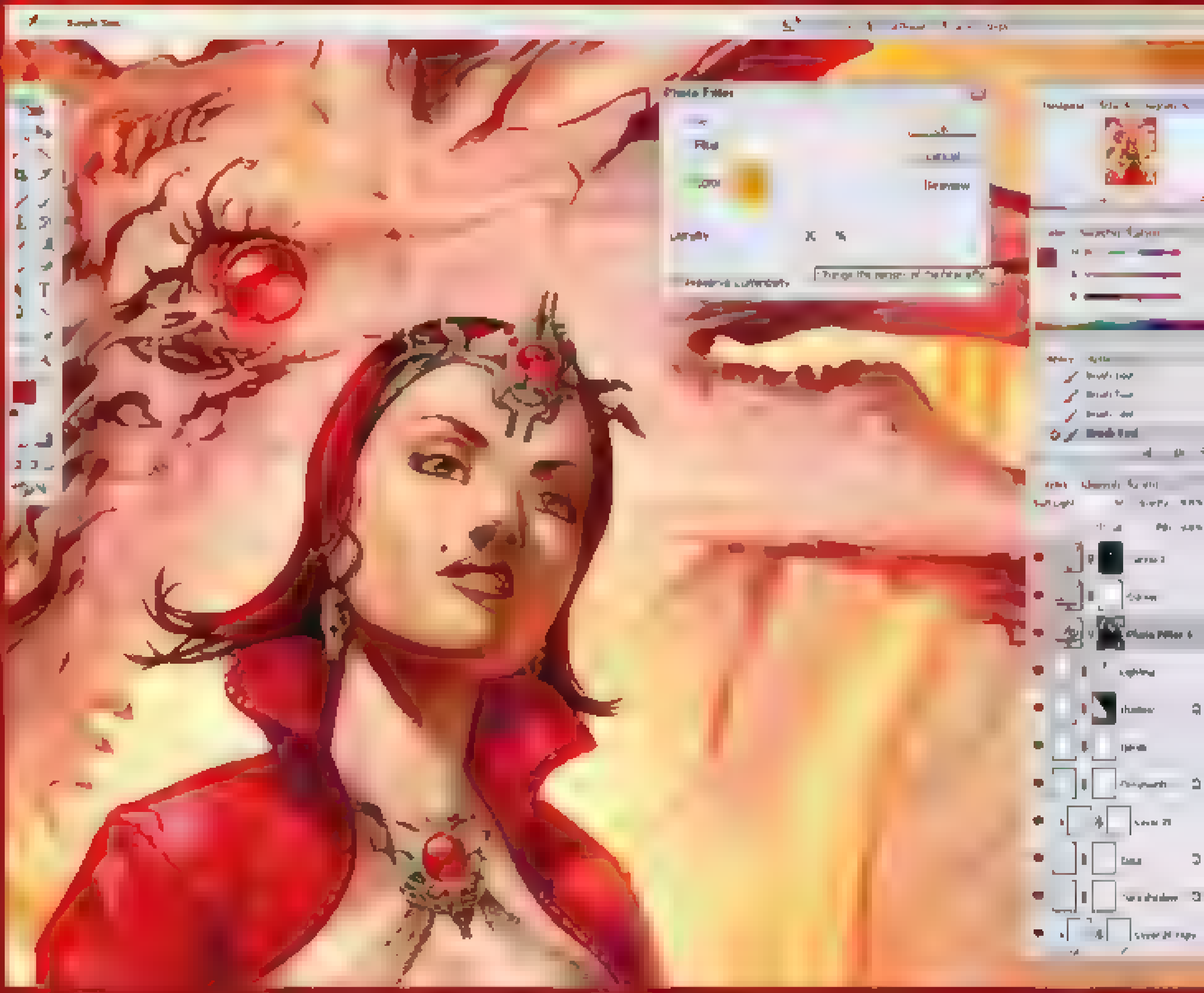
The next step is the glow effect. I copy all of the layers in the flame set and combine them. I add a 40-degree Motion Blur and set the blending mode to Hard Light, then use a mask to retouch some areas. After doing this, I decide to add speculars and reflections on every other element, to connect them to the light. Enveloping the picture in light makes the overall image more homogenous. I use the Blur Tool to add values to different parts of the painting and bring the most important to the front.



12 Final colour correction

For colour correction, I use Curves and Photo Filter via Image>Adjustments. I first choose New Adjustment Layer in the Layer palette: this way, all the changes and corrections are on a separate layer, which you can add different settings to, play around with the opacity and so on.

With the help of the Dodge Tool, I mark out the places where an accent has to be made, while switching the mode to Highlights. This will enrich the colour, as long as you don't overdo it and overexpose the painting.



Storytelling techniques

[illegible]

Workshop files are on your disc

> “Pillaging and fighting is the most common way to describe a pirate... I want to go in the opposite direction”

Marc Brunet, page 64

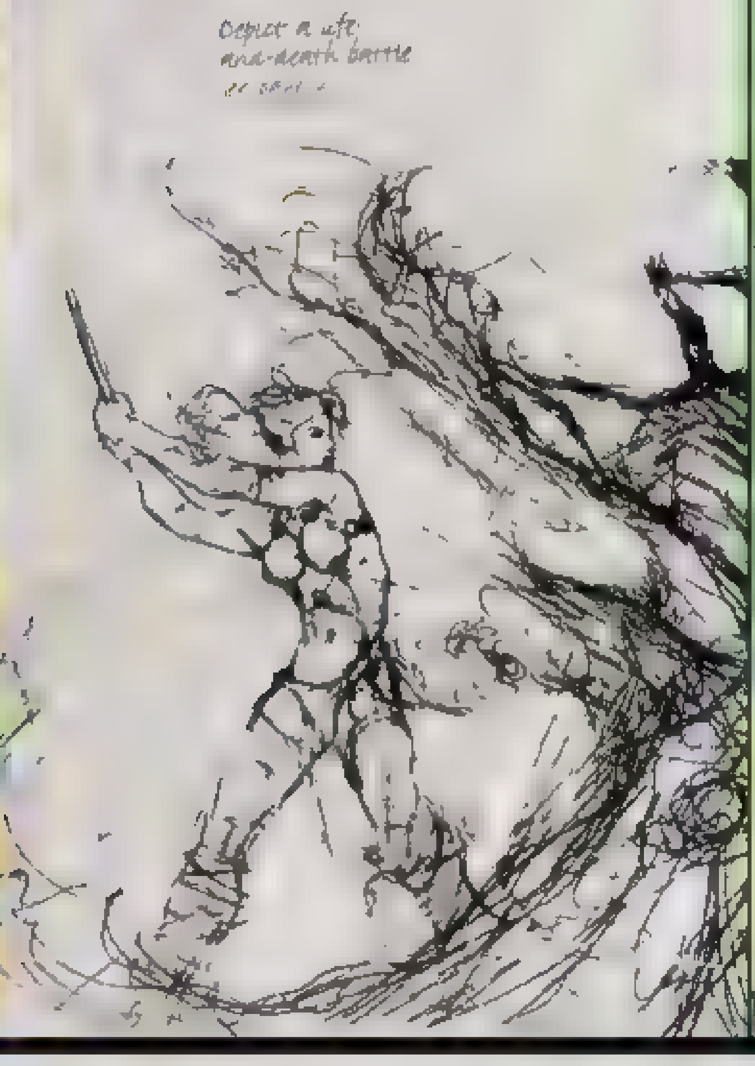
Your guide to using narrative

Bring your character to life by telling their story within your illustration. Think about what's just happened and what they're thinking at the moment you're choosing to paint, then look for ways to show this in the image and help your viewer build a narrative.

Marc Brunet sets out to break the stereotypes of pirates. Turn to page 64.

Workshops

How your character can tell a story



THE WARRIOR IN THE WOODS

[illegible] shows you how to use everything from composition to character design to create an engaging sense of story in your images

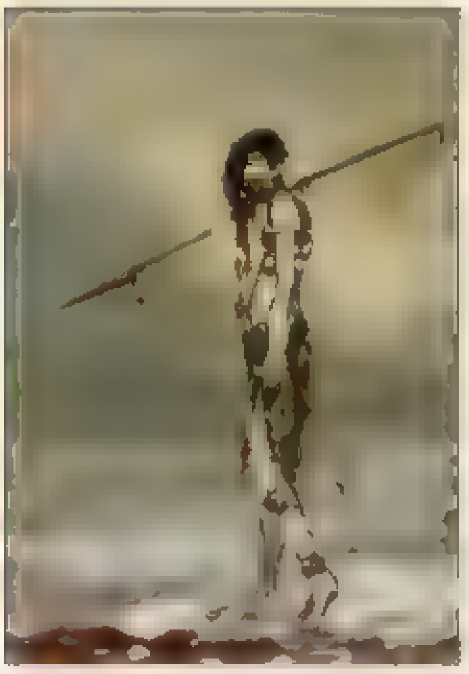
Artist PROFILE

For me, fantasy art and storytelling are two things that go hand in hand. Even as a child, my motivation behind drawing was to depict characters I had imagined – and what good is a character without a story to tell?

Creating narrative in your images can be a challenge, because it's tricky to provide clues to a character's unique history in a simple snapshot. A painting is essentially a window into something larger, so it's useful to consider which moment you choose to portray and how you organise elements in the work.

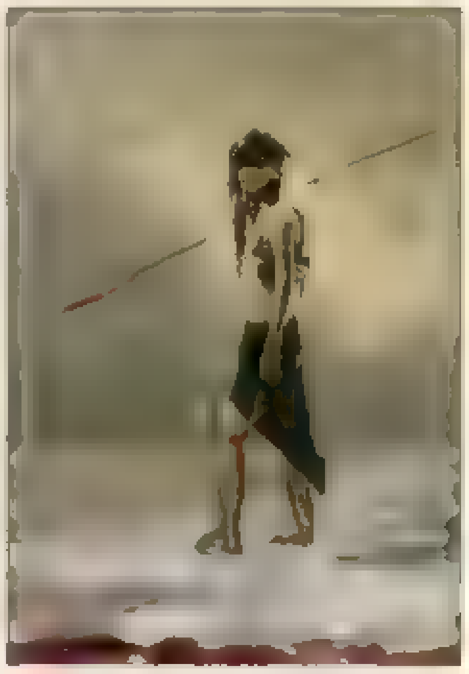
Like any good novel, images can use mystery to draw a viewer in, too. While technical aspects make an image successful, colour, design and body language are essential to its story.

My paintings are often centred around characters and myths with rich histories. I try to put this across by balancing the beauty and elegance of a fantasy world with an unsettling and somewhat savage undertone. This doesn't mean falling back on clichés such as dark forests or lots of blood, though. In this image I use warm colours and a serene environment to unravel an ominous storyline.



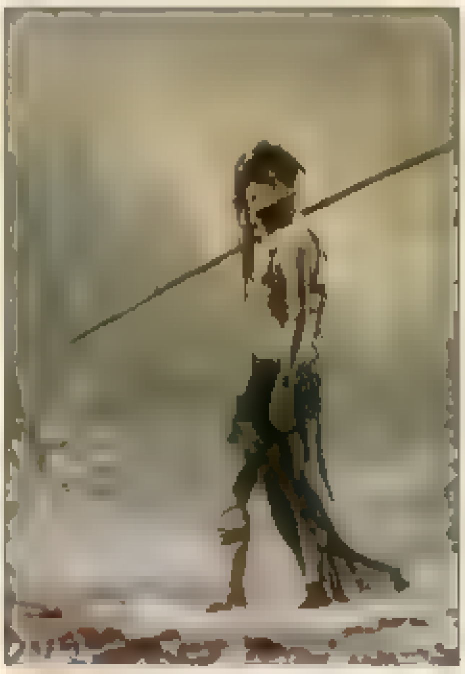
Initial sketch

When an idea for a painting hits me, I purposefully ignore all the things that will make it a technically successful image. Colour, composition, lighting and anatomy all have to be dealt with in the first few stages of painting – but all those things are useless if you don't have a good direction to start with. I usually sketch directly in Photoshop, but for this image I scanned in a doodle, set it to Multiply and quickly coloured it with a Round brush.



Finding the character

After getting the basic idea down, I start refining the image based on what I'm trying to say about the character involved. I snap several photos of myself for reference and ditch the pencil sketch, creating a new layer to block in the character from scratch. At this stage I focus on getting her anatomy passably accurate, using a Spackled brush to blend the colours. I also test out the lighting and flesh out the design of her clothing.



Creating visual paths

The elements in an image should create a visual path for the eye to follow, and getting this right early on is important. With this in mind, I resize the figure and move her to the right side of the canvas, drawing attention to the foreground. The curve of the tree line balances the empty space of the sky and leads the focus to her head. Her spear and gaze are pointing down, which directs the viewer to the trail of blood on the ground.

[illegible]

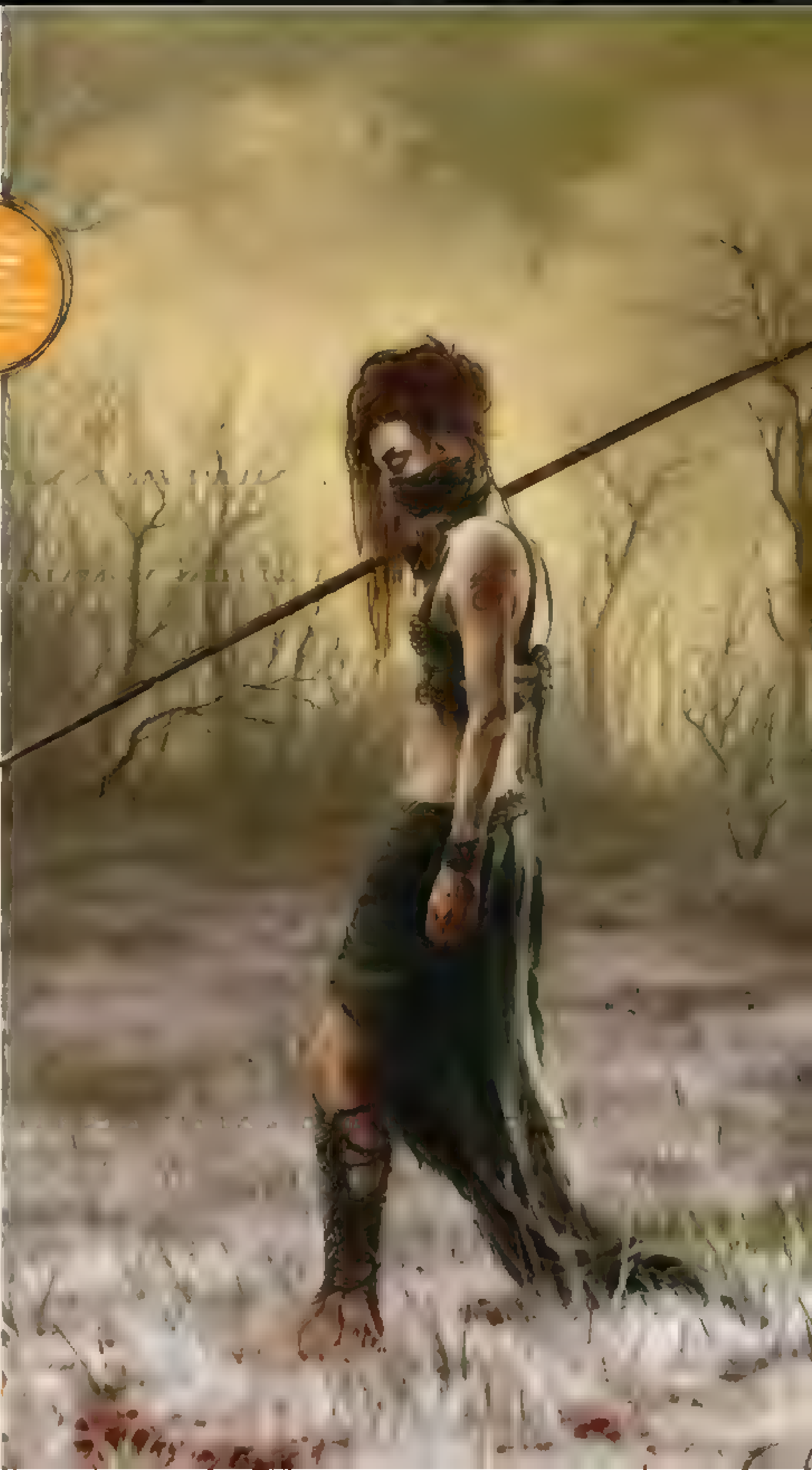
Telling the story

Everything from the composition up should give clues to the narrative of the painting. In this image, I'm depicting a woman hunting down something that is wounded, but the viewer cannot see what it is she's hunting. The woman's body language speaks of a calm confidence that, when combined with the amount of blood in the trail, indicates her prey is badly hurt. Her clothing and attitude also imply she's some kind of warrior. If I do my job right, the contextual clues within the image should make people suspect that whatever she wounded was human and that she's closing in for the kill.

Developing the environment

The environment your story takes place in is vital, but be careful not to let it overwhelm the character you've created. For my image, I decide to keep the sky subtle to balance out the dark trees.

Next, I solidify the forest, working to define the prominent trees I'm using as compositional devices. I also flesh out the horizon line and refine the meadow so that it looks like it recedes into the



distance. While doing this, I notice the contrast is looking dull, so I mess about with the Saturation levels, bringing out the golden tones in the sky. This gives the whole image a different feel that's a little weird: cold, snowy scenes aren't usually depicted with warm tones, but I happen to like it.

Face first

I always detail the character's face before any other part of the body, and I think many character-driven artists tend to work similarly. Using a Spackled brush and a small custom Round brush, I blend and texture the skin, keeping the look painterly. I also brush some bright red at low opacity over her cheeks and ear to show the effects of the chill air.

PRO SECRETS

[illegible]

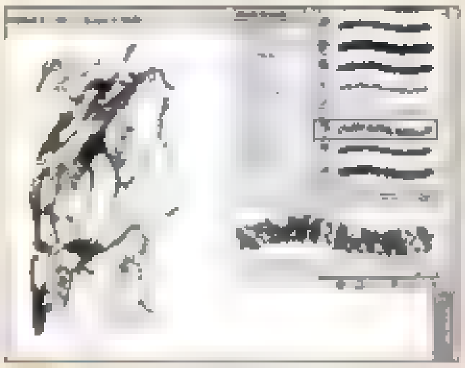
Detailing the trees

The trees are distant, but I don't want to neglect them, as they create context for my story. I go a bit crazy on detailing the branches, so to balance this out I'm careful to keep the trees at a low contrast and to overlay subtle textures, keeping the edges from being too sharp. Plenty of detail may seem like a good thing, but you need to keep a balance between having an interesting background and detracting from the foreground.

Working back to front

The meadow is the key to portraying the distance of the landscape here. To create a believable feeling of grass receding into the distance, I work from the back of the image to the front.

I also take the picture into Painter for the first time, because nothing can beat Painter's Oils and Palette Knives when it comes to creating great-looking grass.

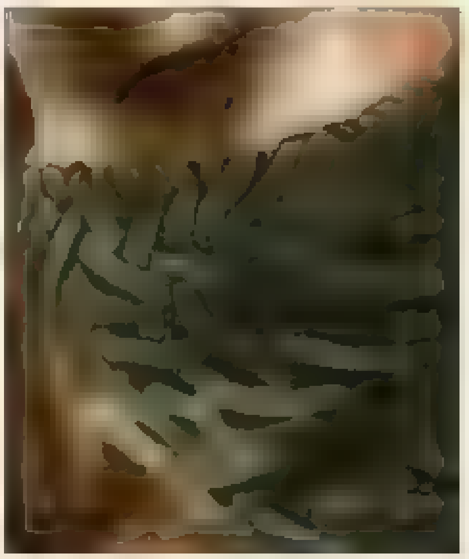


Creative custom brush effects

To enhance the look of the tree branches and provide convincing depth in the field, I paint using two custom brushes I've created from photo textures. One is a bark texture – but it's not intended to paint bark. By setting it to Scatter with an Angle Jitter, the texture creates an abstract noise effect that's excellent for implying detail in the distance. The other brush is taken from a stone column and is intended to be used sparingly. Both brushes are on your disc.

Behind the mask

The clothing of any character tells you a lot about what kind of culture they are from, giving clues to the sort of life they lead. Over the years, I've developed my own cultural design for the world my characters live in; a part of this is a braided woven pattern on the clothing they wear. For this character, I want the pattern to be a little chaotic, as though it's hand-made. I sketch some guidelines for the braiding in Photoshop, then switch between Photoshop and Painter's Palette Knives – which are great for leathery textures – to render the material.



Establishing anatomy

Now that I'm happy with her face, I start to render her upper torso. I choose to start with her arm – it's the most visible part of her body and acts as a guide for the lighting. I ignore her clothing for now: there's no point in detailing it until I've straightened out the proportions of her shoulders. Don't rush and try not to get ahead of yourself with details – always focus on structure first.

Tattoo art

After I paint her shoulder, I create a new layer for her tattoo, a tribal symbol representing the sect of warriors she belongs to. I sketch the shape of the symbol with a small Round brush, then use Edit>Transform and Filter>Liquify in Photoshop to warp the shape so that it looks like it is a part of her skin. To enhance the effect, I edit the colour of the tattoo to follow the shading of her arm and paint a crosshatched pattern over the edges to make it blend with her skin. Then I flatten the layer down.

Painting the hair

For the hair, I take the image back into Painter. Oil brushes are great for painting hair and I'm not after too much detail for this image. Haircuts are another device that imply culture and history. In this image, the woman's hair is short on the side, but long down the middle with tiny braids in it, giving it a tribal flair.

Finishing her torso

Looking over the details and the changes I've made, I decide to bring in her stomach, giving her a leaner appearance. Then I focus on her top, which is made of the same material and in the style of her mask. Common themes like this can add a real cohesion to your painting. I also paint the hand holding the spear, almost forgetting to put it behind her hair.

Creating the spear

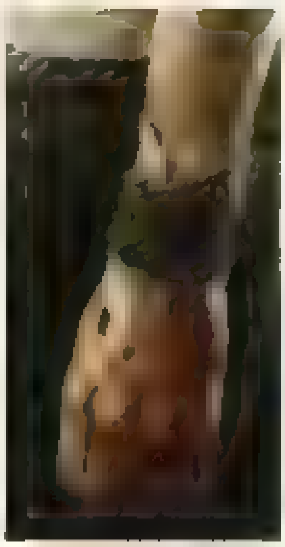
The spear is one of the more technically difficult parts of the image, simply because it's a straight object. First, I use the Line Tool in Photoshop to make sure the shaft is even in width and relatively straight. Next, I paint the spear's head in a separate document to ensure it's straight and symmetrical, then import it into the painting. Using the Transform Tool, I rotate it to the right angle and size

Refining the fabric

I tend to use a combination of Painter and Photoshop to paint fabric, paying close attention to both the lighting and the forms interacting with the cloth. The warrior's thigh folds the skirt around her leg, but the rest of it drops straight back behind her before curving gently to catch on the grass. I've found that the key to convincing fabric is defining folds sharply, then taking the Palette Knife in Painter or a hard brush in Photoshop and going over portions of the cloth, adding subtle nuances of texture to suggest that more minor folds are present.

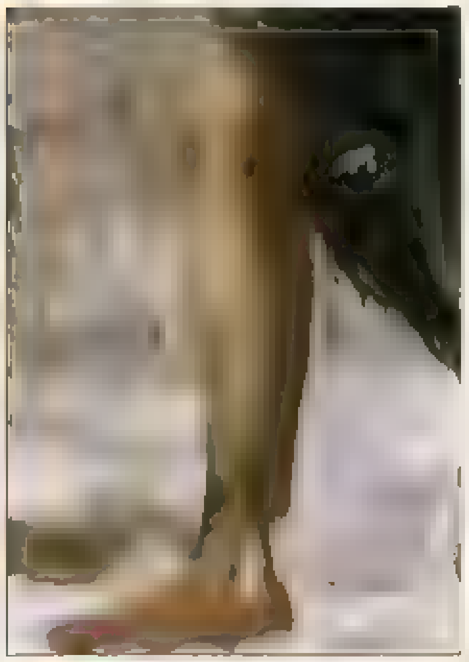
PRO SECRETS

[illegible]



Defining the legs

Since I've got the character on a single layer, I have to paint over the sketch of the leg bracer to render her legs properly. I don't worry too much about detailing her feet, because I know they are partially obscured by the grass and won't be seen. After I render her calf, I re-sketch the bracer on a new layer and paint it in the same fashion as her top and mask.



Fixing her hand

Her hand looks unnatural, so I adjust the angle of her fingers to correct this. I then detail the hand so that it fits with the arm's impression of strength. On a new layer, I get out a semi-Soft Round brush and drip blood on her hand, arm and clothing to help connect her with the blood on the grass at her feet.

Foreground grass

The grass in front of the figure is tricky. I don't want it to be too busy, distracting the viewer from the blood on the ground, but I also need to it have more detail than the grass behind her. The portion of the grass that runs off the edge of the canvas is the trickiest to paint. In the end, I copy sections of the grass closer to her body and overlap them at various opacities to create a feeling of depth without detracting from the warrior. A few minor touch-ups later the image is complete. ●

THE PECULIAR PIRATE GIRL

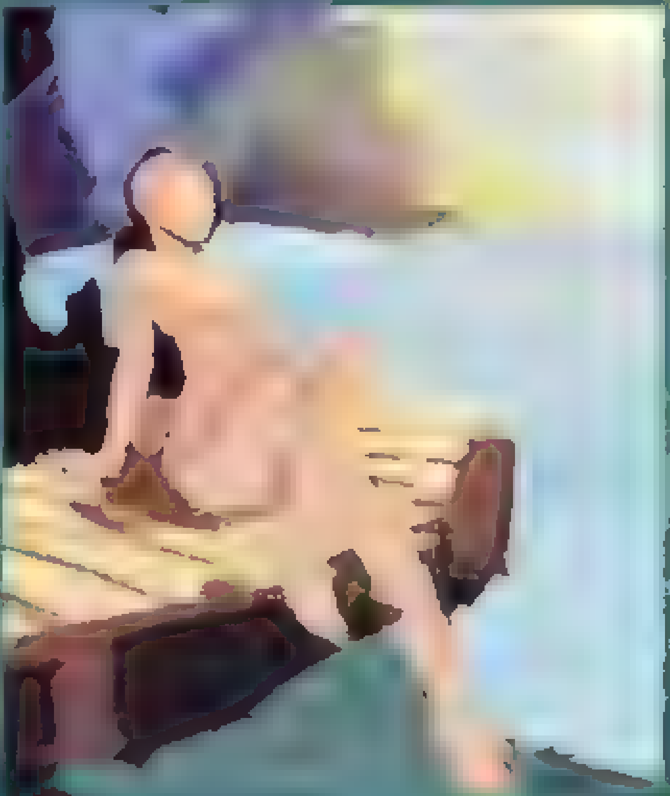
Marc Brunet guides you through the creation of his image The Shipwreck from start to finish...

Pirates have always fascinated me, and I am sure the same goes for many other artists. They are ruthless seamen [illegible] the goods of others, pillaging [illegible] fighting [illegible] more money and treasure. [illegible] this might be the most common [illegible] describe a pirate, what I want to do [illegible] workshop is to think outside [illegible] in the opposite direction [illegible] how to paint an accident-prone female pirate relaxing on a deck after totalling her ship. I'll give extra attention to colour and composition, and demonstrate how the former can help to improve the latter.

When I start a new personal piece I normally have only a slight [illegible] the finished painting will [illegible] more interesting [illegible] as I progress. For my work [illegible] Blizzard, I draw rough sketches of the character first – [illegible] their accessories, clothes and weapons. I draw them from different angles and try a few different versions until I'm satisfied. Next, I draw a couple of different sketches to get a feel of the final composition of the painting, [illegible] sketch I like best.

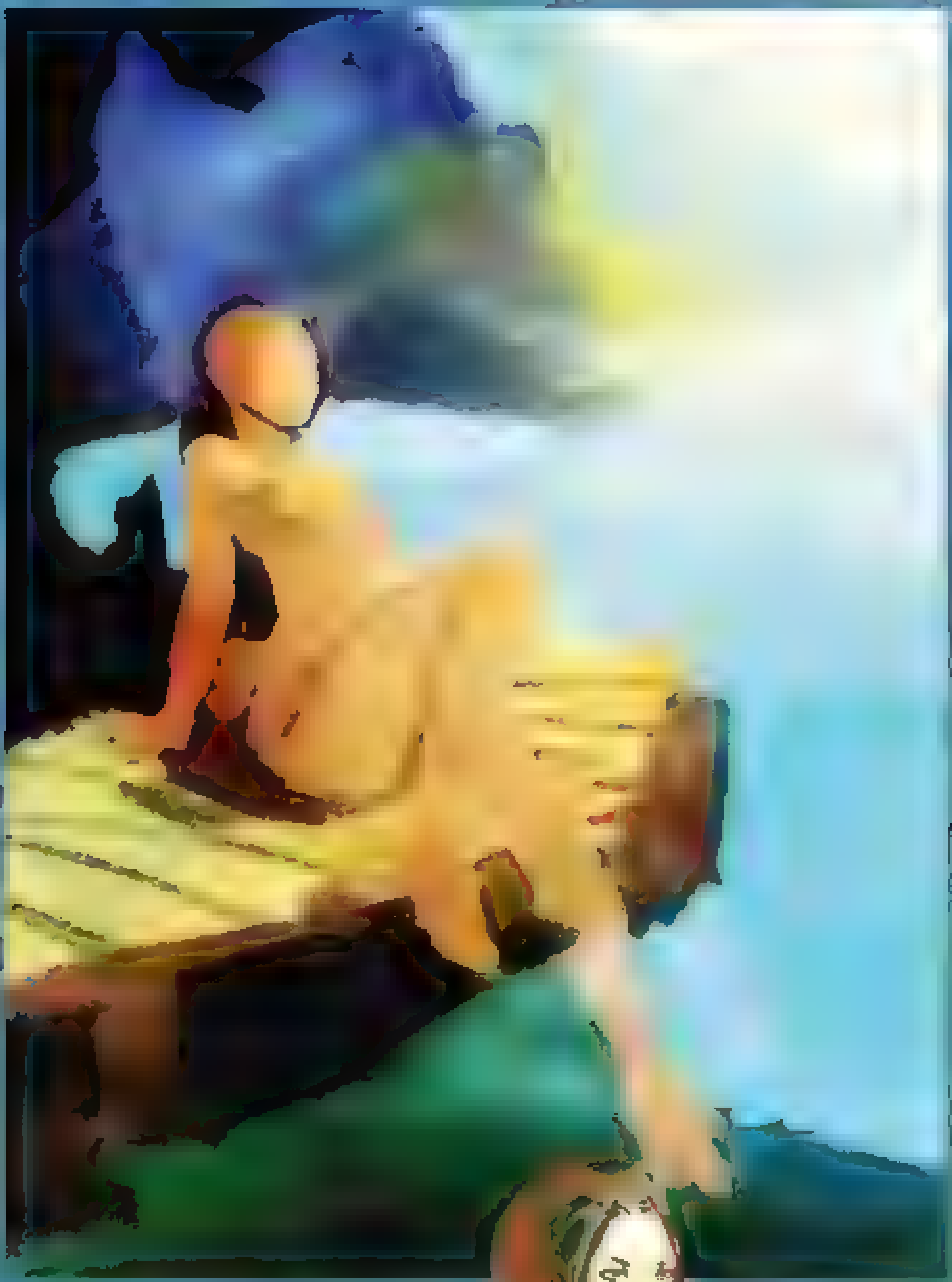
Today, I will treat myself [illegible] freedom and start the exact same way I would for a speedpaint, with rough shapes and no line art. I always like to see how it all unfolds.

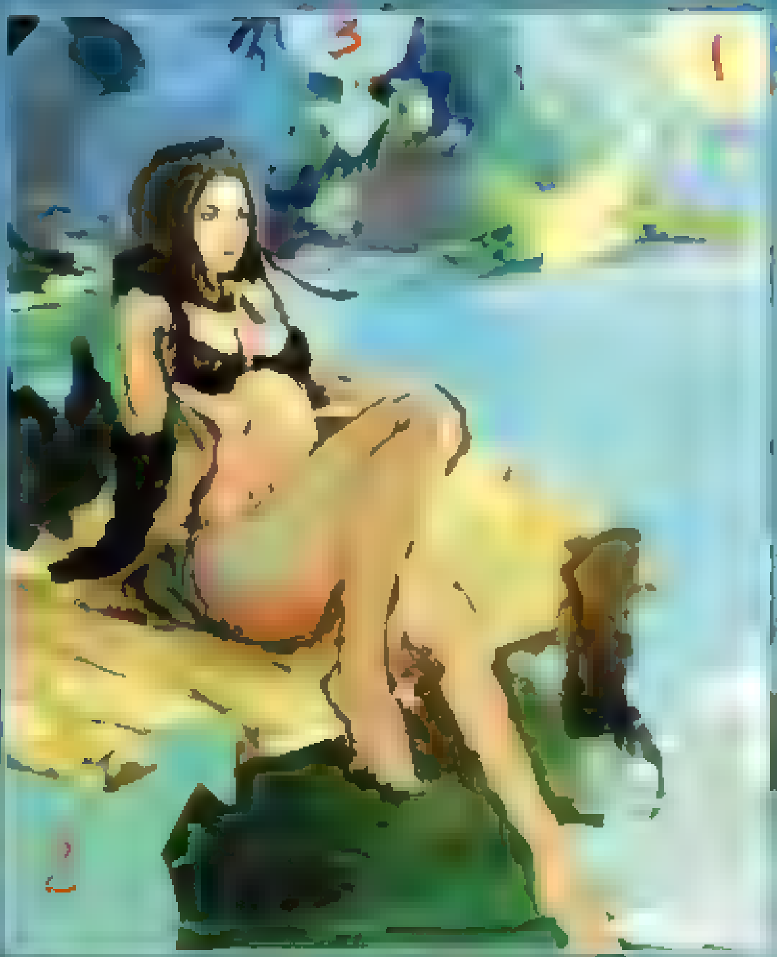
PROFILE

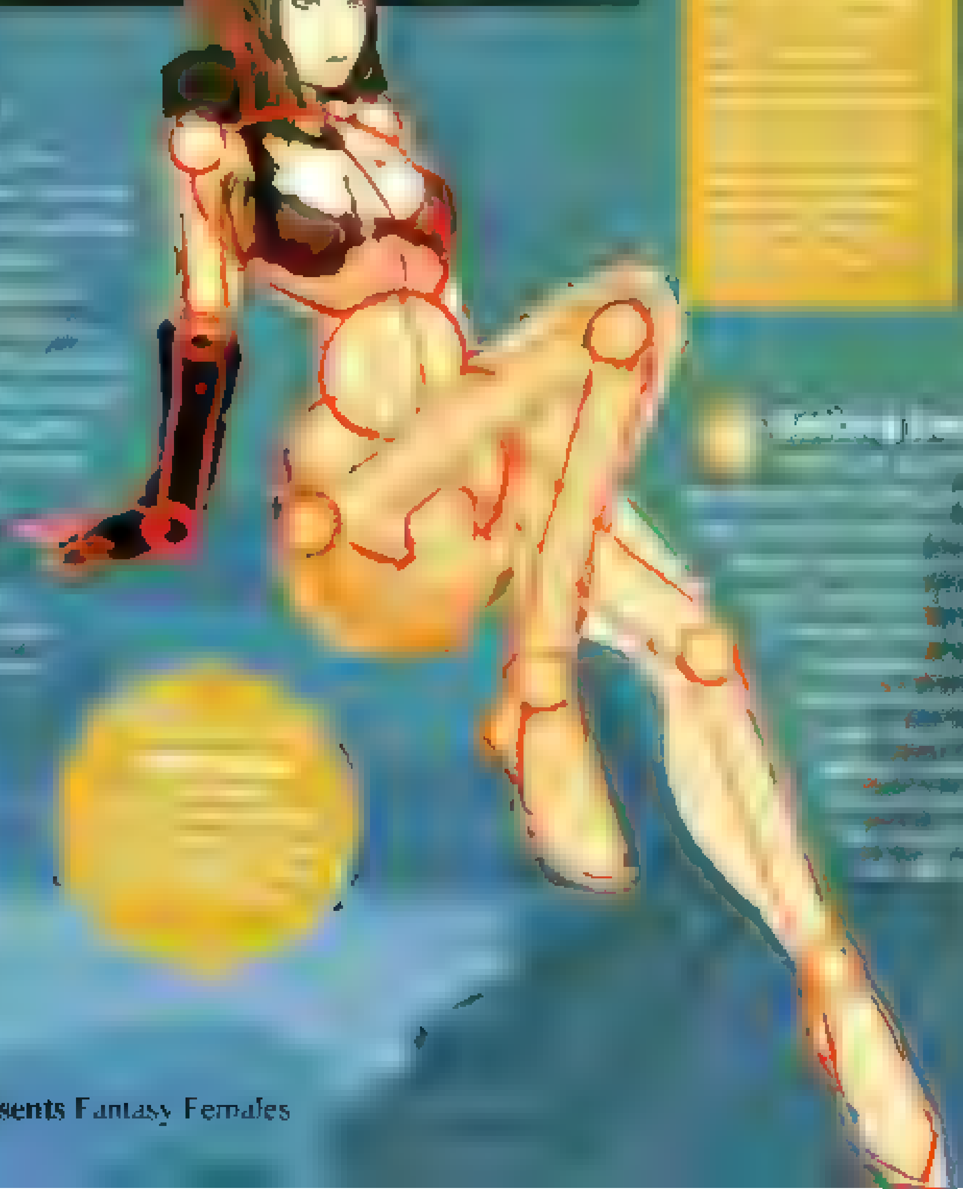


Blocking out

To start this painting, I draw rough shapes of what will become the subject of the piece. At this point, don't worry about what kind of brush you should use; you're just trying to get a feel of the basic composition. Sometimes I start with black and white, and add the colours later with the blending mode set to Color. It's [illegible] important at this stage.







Setting the right palette

[illegible]

PRO SECRETS

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

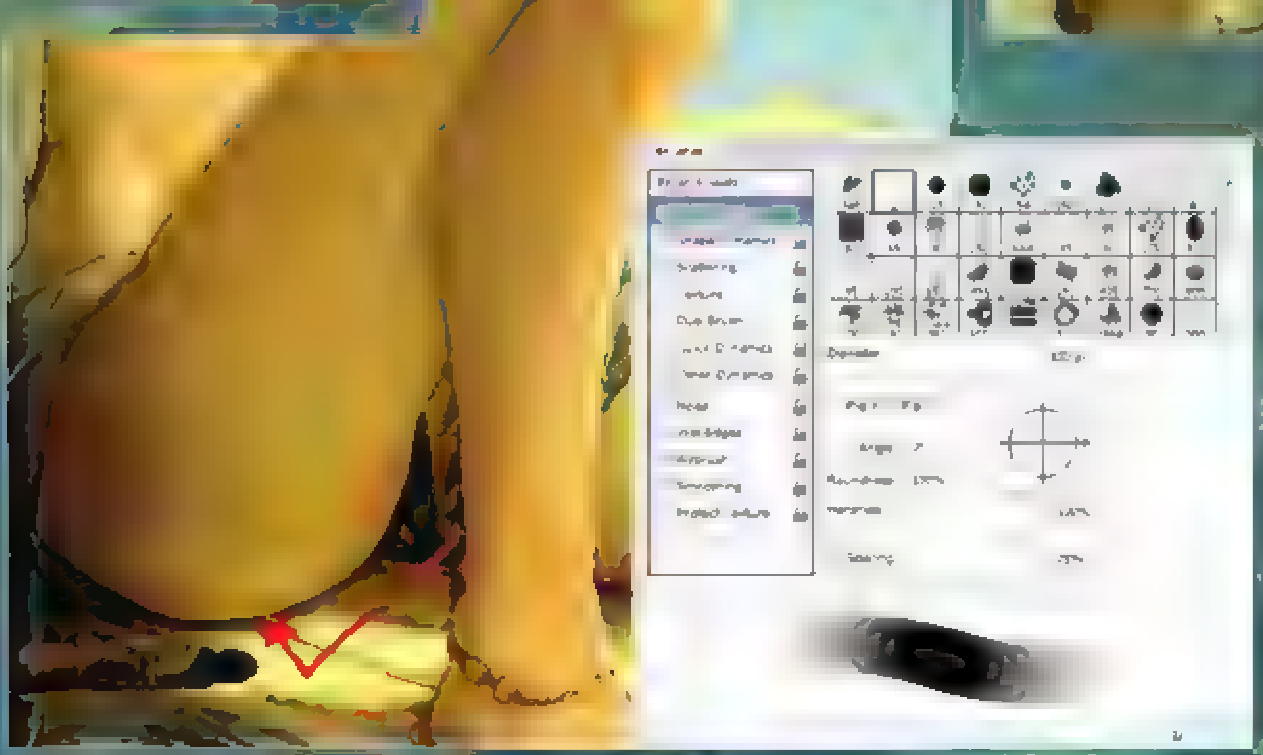
The face

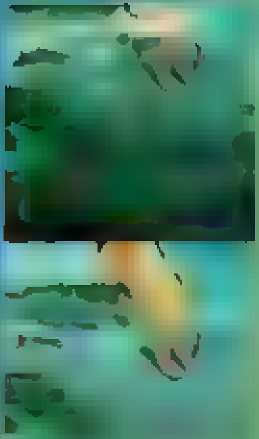
[illegible]

The part I spend the most time on [illegible]

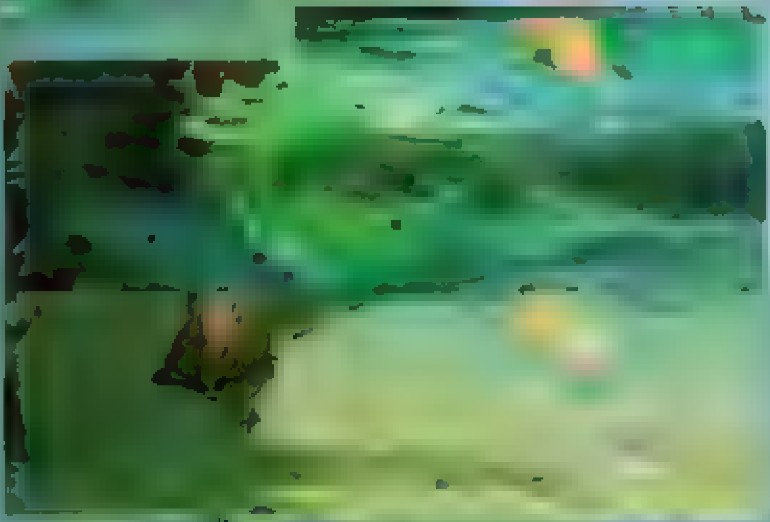
Pretty skin

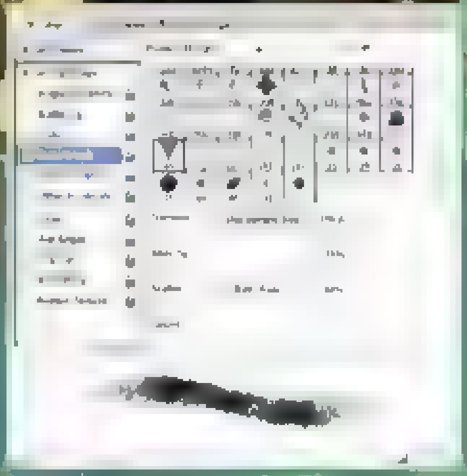
Now [illegible] time to get started on the rest of the body. Skin [illegible] one of the [illegible] things to nail down, but as soon as you succeed, it looks so [illegible] you [illegible] take a bite [illegible] the darkest the skin gets. After that, taking each light in the [illegible] the character. I usually start with the light coming from [illegible] then the rest. I am still using a simple Round brush in Normal mode. After all the lights are taken into consideration, it should already look good. All that's left is to add small colour variations based on the part of the body. The knees, for example, should be darker than the thighs, considering the skin in the area is subject to more physical damage, and also has more folds that imprison the light.





[illegible]



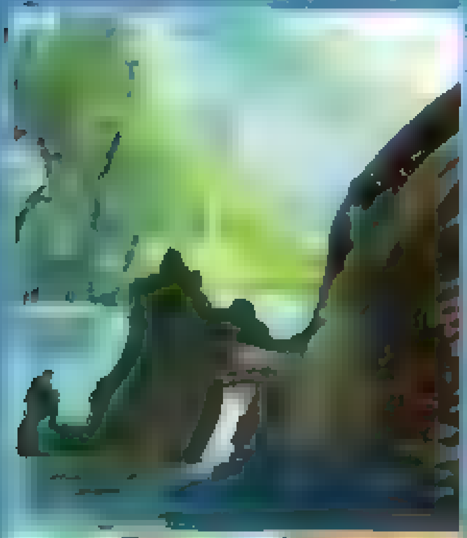


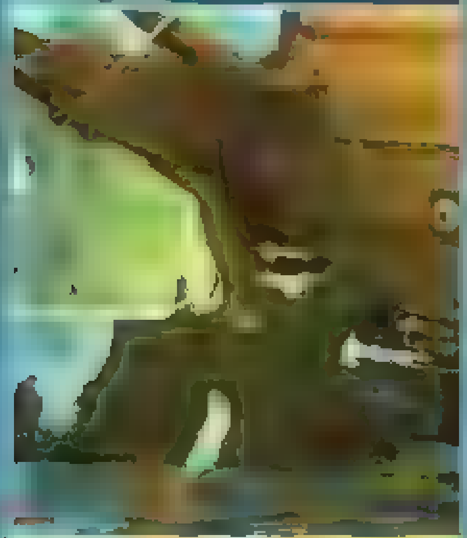
Pirate clothes

Pirates wear a lot of [illegible]

Light/dark contrast

A technique I like to use to make an image really stand out – and to be dynamic regardless of the actual subject matter – is to give it a high contrast value. [illegible] on the light setup, but it's how bright and how dark a lit or a shadowed surface will be. In my eyes, and especially for this painting of the sexy pirate, the more contrast the better!





Shipwreck

The addition of this shipwreck [illegible] saving the composition of the painting. It really helps use up the empty [illegible] was sitting expectantly right [illegible] the pirate girl. It was really uncomfortable for the eyes until that gap was filled. What I am doing is drawing the entire ship beyond the canvas to help me get the proportions right, then cropping it back to the right size.

Painting the island

While environments are a blast to paint, I won't go crazy on this one [illegible] is not the focal point. With all the details and all the things going around in the picture, I really can't have anything else steal the show. Again, I am mostly using the Chalk brush here. It's like magic – it works for everything!

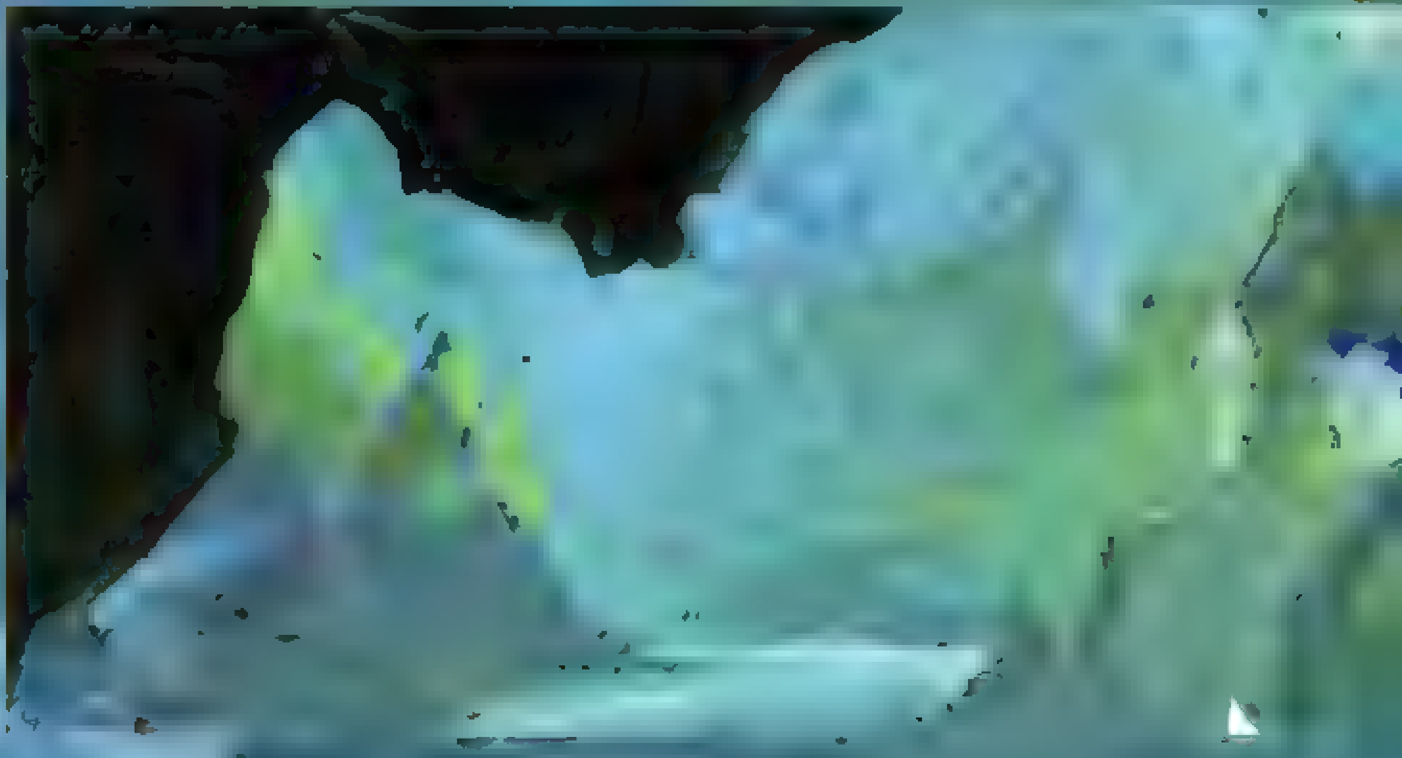
PRO SECRETS

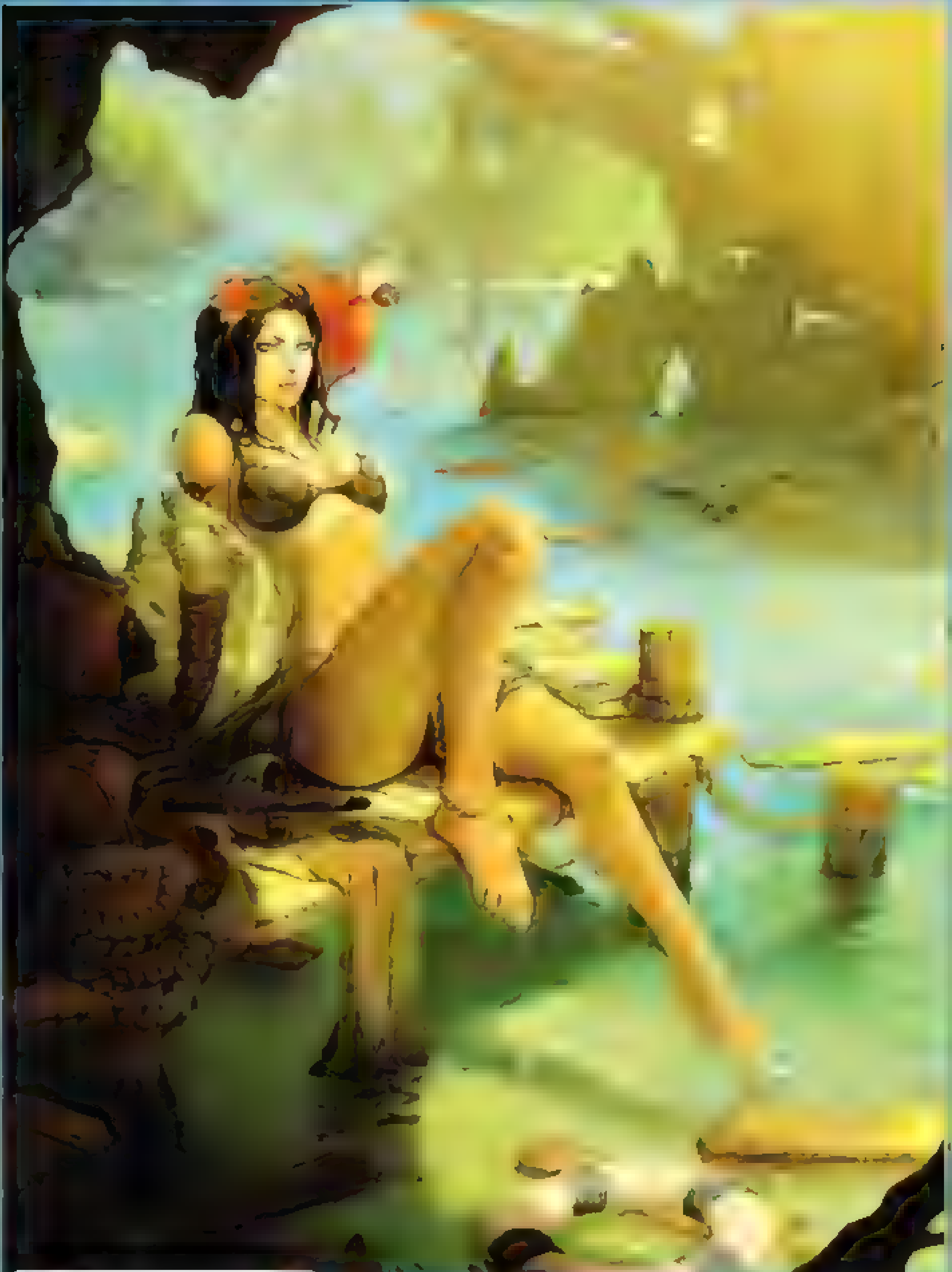
[illegible]

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

[illegible]

[illegible]





[illegible]

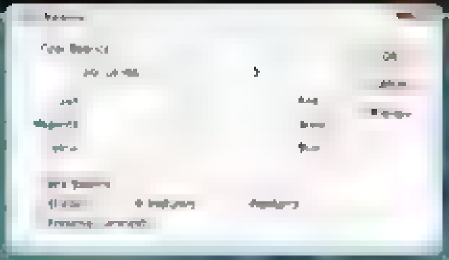
[illegible]

[illegible] spective

[illegible] get confusing. The [illegible] rtant, is not the [illegible] needs to be toned down [illegible] ntains in the back. This [illegible] heric perspective comes [illegible] fog in the scene and give [illegible] Soft Round brush set to Hard Light, and [illegible] it on the background. It kills the contrast, and makes the foreground stand out more too.

Final details

[illegible] painting is almost done. The [illegible] strokes crisper and cleaner. Using a standard Round brush while zoomed in [illegible] a long and boring part of the process, [illegible] It transforms the rough image into a [illegible]



Colo[illegible]ction

[illegible]

Photoshop & ArtRage

LIFE VS DEATH

Viktor Titov reveals his digital techniques and working methods for creating his epic fantasy illustrations

Artist

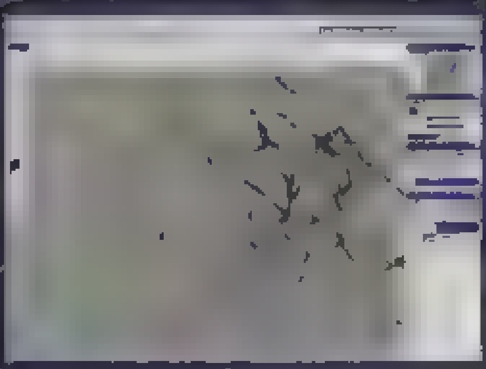
PROFILE

What do you do when you have plenty of free time and feel like painting a gargantuan battle scene? To start, you might normally just grab a pencil and a sheet of paper and get right down to work – but before that, I'd recommend that you concoct a picture in your head of what exactly you plan to draw.

It may be an enormous and cruel orc throwing away its enemies like rag dolls, or a proud Amazonian man astride a horse, poised just before a crucial attack. You're picturing this scene in detail right now, aren't you? That's what you should try to capture as you sketch. Don't just show a scene: tell a story.

In this workshop, you'll learn some methods and techniques I used in the artwork that you see here, called Life Vs Death. I'll show you how I work with the layers in Photoshop. You'll also become acquainted with my methods for using brushes, as well as my usage of ArtRage, a great painting program that complements Photoshop well.

Along the way, I will try my best to explain how it's possible to achieve the expressiveness of images with the help of colour and light.



1 Setting the idea and composition

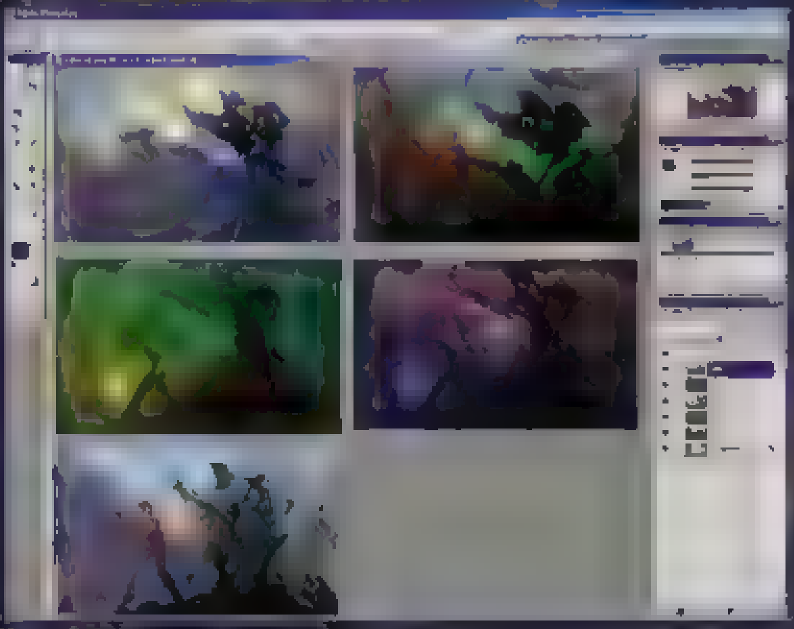
When sketching, I usually start with a paper and a pencil, but this time I'm applying my sketch ideas straight into Photoshop with my Wacom Intuos2. Usually, I draw several variants of a composition, but I have decided in favour of just one for this piece.

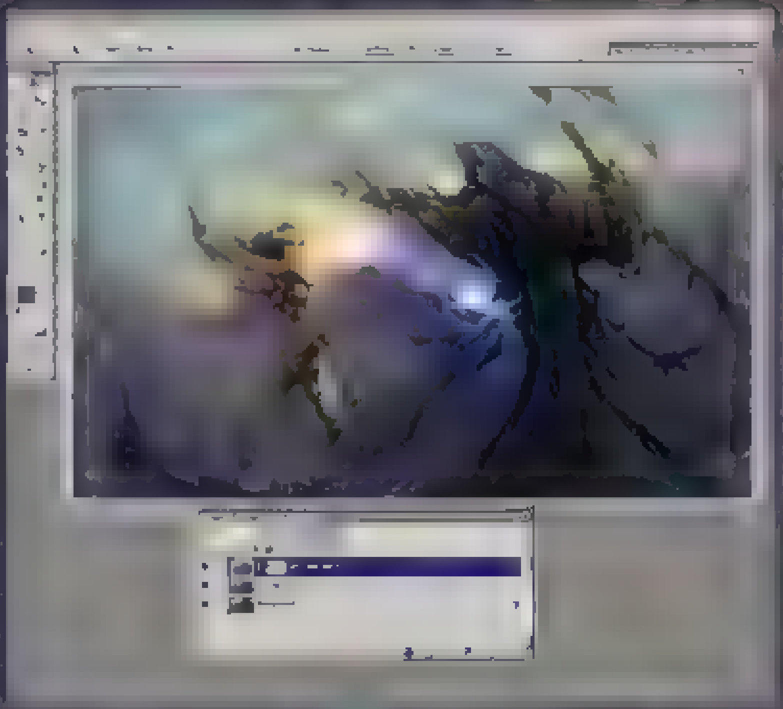
As you can see, I work over a line drawing without much detail, leaving some space for further colour searching. It often turns out that after the coloured sketches, I need to make some changes to the main shapes and the arrangement of the objects in the picture.

2 Colour sketching

Now it's time to proceed to the colour. I usually make a good number of variants of the colour solution to any picture, just to see what looks best. The same scene may be rendered in a few completely different ways.

For example, you may imagine the scene laid in a dark vault with lit torches and the light coming through from above; or it may be early morning or evening. The sun can be shining brightly, or the weather can be damp and foggy. In this case, I'm attracted by the variant with the warm evening sky and a far away rocky landscape, sunk into a blueish smoke.





Shortcuts

Soften the fringe
Alt+Ctrl+D (PC)
Alt+Cmd+D (Mac)

Use this to soften the fringe of your selection. Set the pixels used to control the softening.

PRO SECRETS

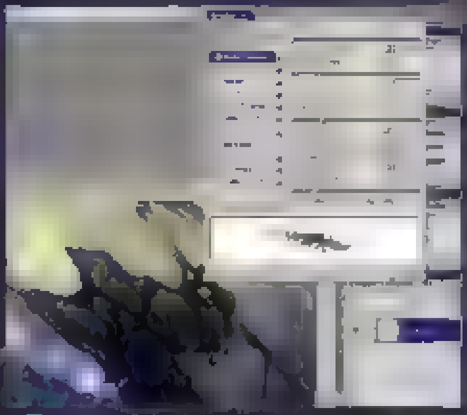
Get rid of white

I advise you to start drawing over a light grey background, not with a white background: your eyes will perceive the lines better and get less tired. It also helps that there's colour on the page, so that you're not staring at a blank screen.

3 Arranging layers

Now I've finished with adding colour for a while, I can start arranging the layers in Photoshop. First, I divide the line drawing into two layers: I call the first one Death Line and the second Woman Line. One is at the top; the other is right below it.

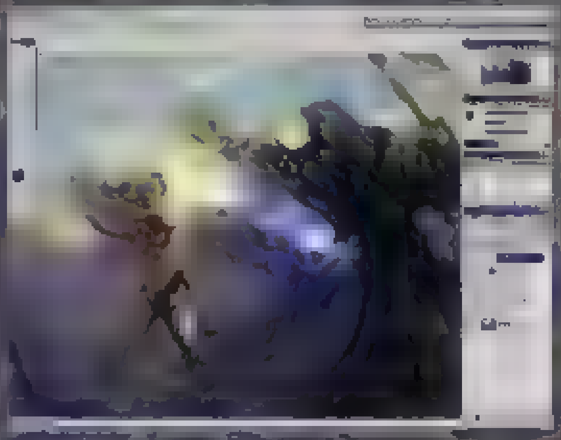
I use the colour sketch as a preliminary background, having cut the girl's figure and the figure of death. I paste them accordingly under the line drawing. By doing it this way I am able to correct the colour spectrum of each figure independently of the background.



4 Creating your own brush

I now mark the main shapes of the landscape in the background and emphasise the lit part with more colour. I also use different brushes: first, a brush in a maple leaf shape (like Falling Ivy in the Special Effect set), then some other brushes I made myself.

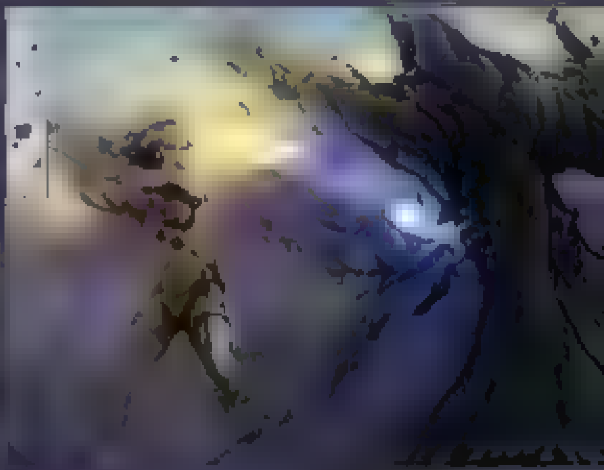
Here's how I make one of these brushes: I open up a new file of 100x100 pixels and apply several chaotically placed spots on the surface, then go to Edit>Define Brush Preset. In the Brushes palette, I enable Brush Dynamics and Shape Dynamics. You can see the results of this brush in the background and also on the figure of the ghost.



5 Continuation of detailing

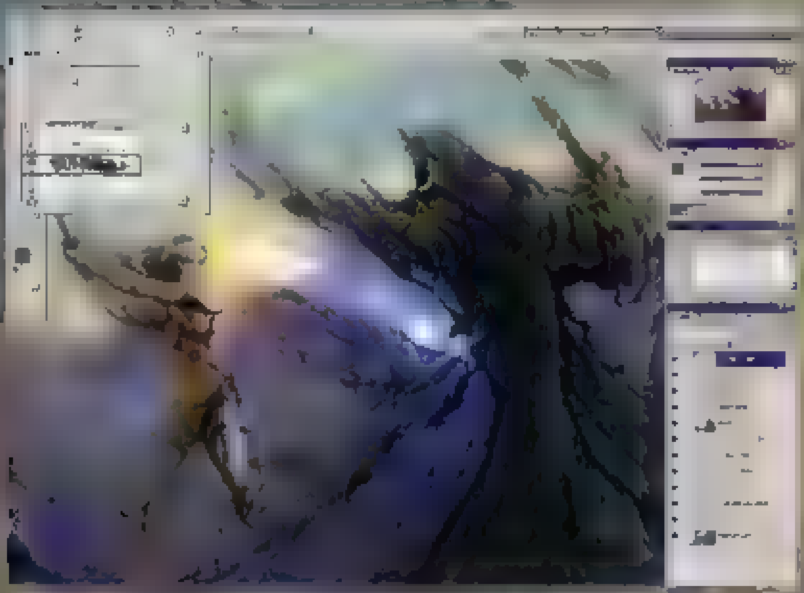
I want to bring a little more colour variety into the figure of death, and emphasise the girl's figure with some contrasting spots. I also decide to draw the clouds using the colour palette from the picture.

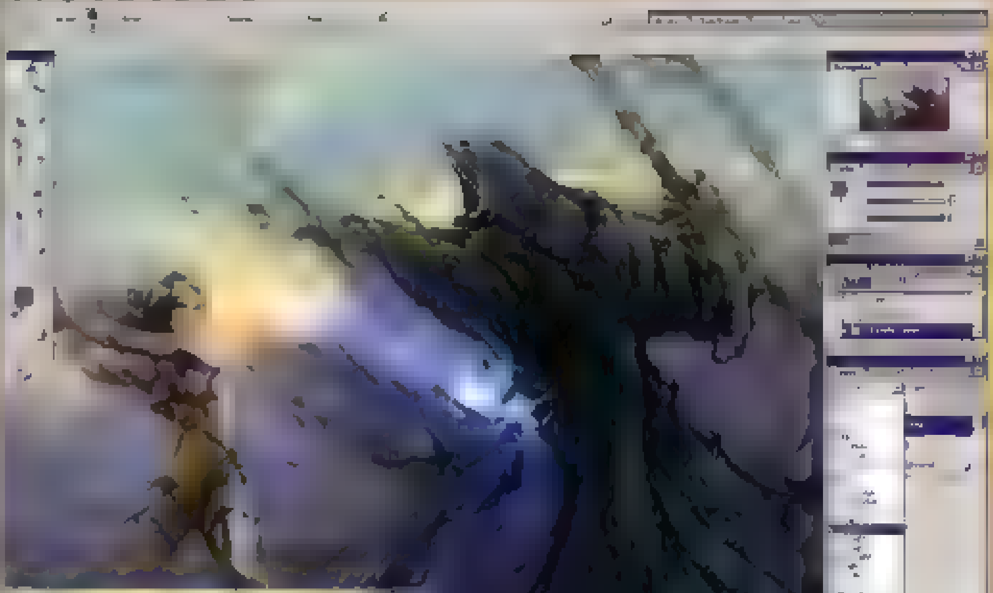
Now I apply a new layer for the death figure, above the line drawing – I do this both to get rid of the lines and to achieve greater vividness. On this layer I work over the additional illumination of the figure. To make a chain around the figure of death's torso, I draw the main shapes of the chain links with dark shades that are close to black. Then I use a brush in Vivid Light mode to place bright glares.



6 Detailing the girl

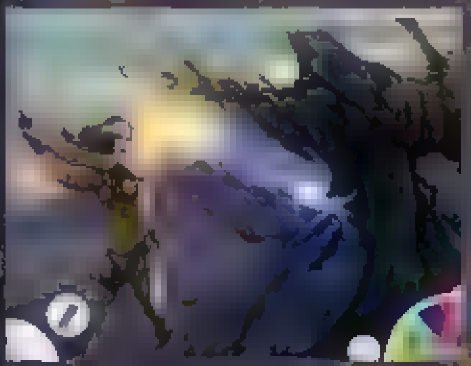
I begin to work detail into the girl's figure, using the help of a simple Round brush and the Blur Tool. To highlight muscles and movement on the figure, I apply warm tones to the shadow and cool tones where the figure is well-lit. When drawing the metal armour, I use Soft Light and Vivid Light brush modes in turns, working over the different shades and glares. At this stage, I create a little yellow glare from the sky on the figure and armour outline, but without making it too explicit. For the hair, I accentuate the common mass and the ringlets with a wide hard-edged brush.





7 Creating texture

Having achieved the desired effect with the addition of details, I make up a Soft Light effect layer, which helps to soften the lines that I drew earlier. With the help of different brushes, I create an interesting texture that makes the whole canvas much more diverse and detailed. This, I believe, adds a little charm and style to my artwork and makes it a more interesting and desirable spectacle for the viewer.

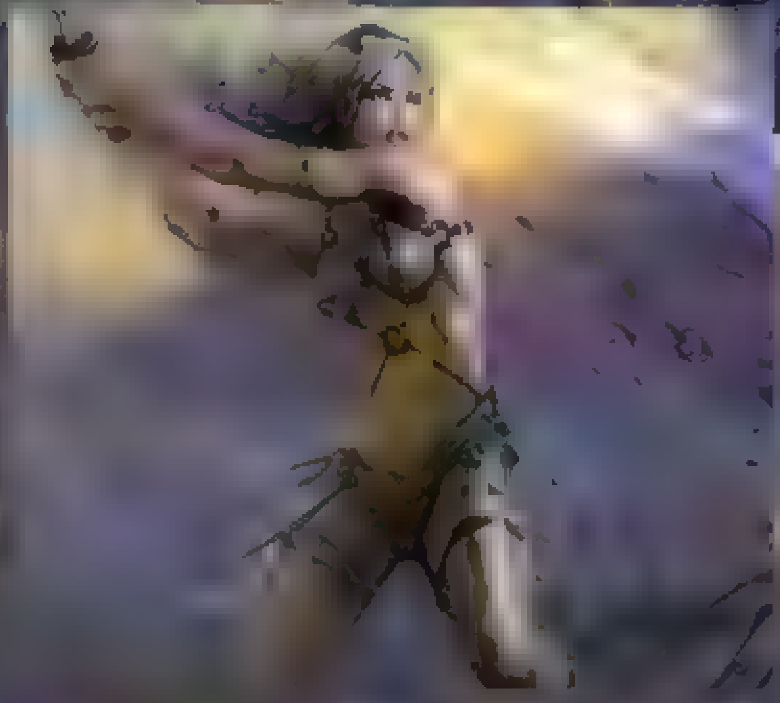


8 Painting in ArtRage

Now I save the work in the BMP format and open it in the ArtRage program. It's a wonderful program that can make me feel as if I'm painting with real brushes and oils. At this stage I try to underline the colour contrasts when it's necessary, working over light spaces around the characters, for example. I also apply some stains on the highlighted folds of the clothes. It's important not to oversaturate the work with these touches. In the dark spaces I leave the texture as it is.

9 Reverting back

I save the work and go back into Photoshop. Here, as you can't use too many layers because the file sizes are large, I suggest placing the imported image as a separate upper layer on the last variant of the picture. I merge all the layers into one, which makes the file size smaller and the work much simpler. I create a layer mask to get rid of some of the ArtRage layers where the strokes are too heavy so I can reveal the texture underneath.

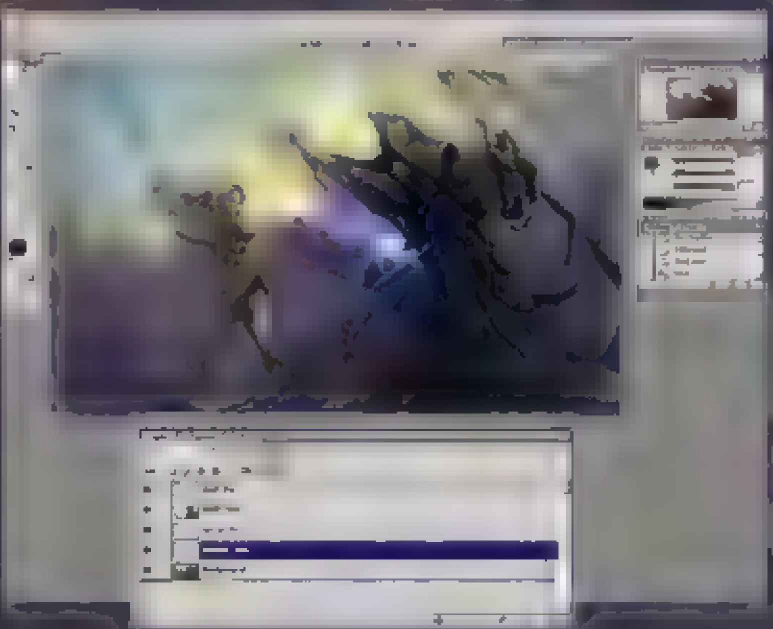


Shortcuts
Switch files
Ctrl+Tab (PC)
This shortcut enables you to quickly switch between Photoshop files when you have several open.

10 Unfinished details

On a new layer, I paint in the finer details, such as the cloth folds in the foreground. The face and the hair of the girl need to be finished too. I paint these using standard tools like the Round brush and Smudge Tool.

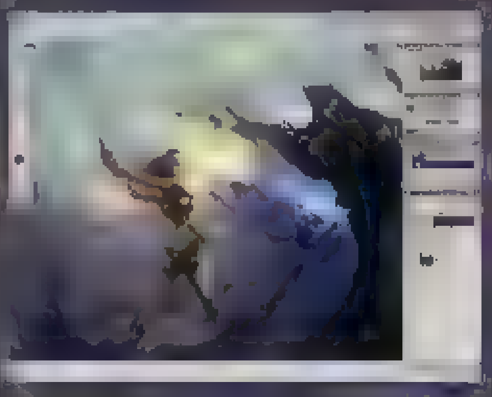
Now I want to work over the background. I create a layer with the Soft Light effect and paint some transparent blue fog, which casts over the distant mountains.



11 Finishing work

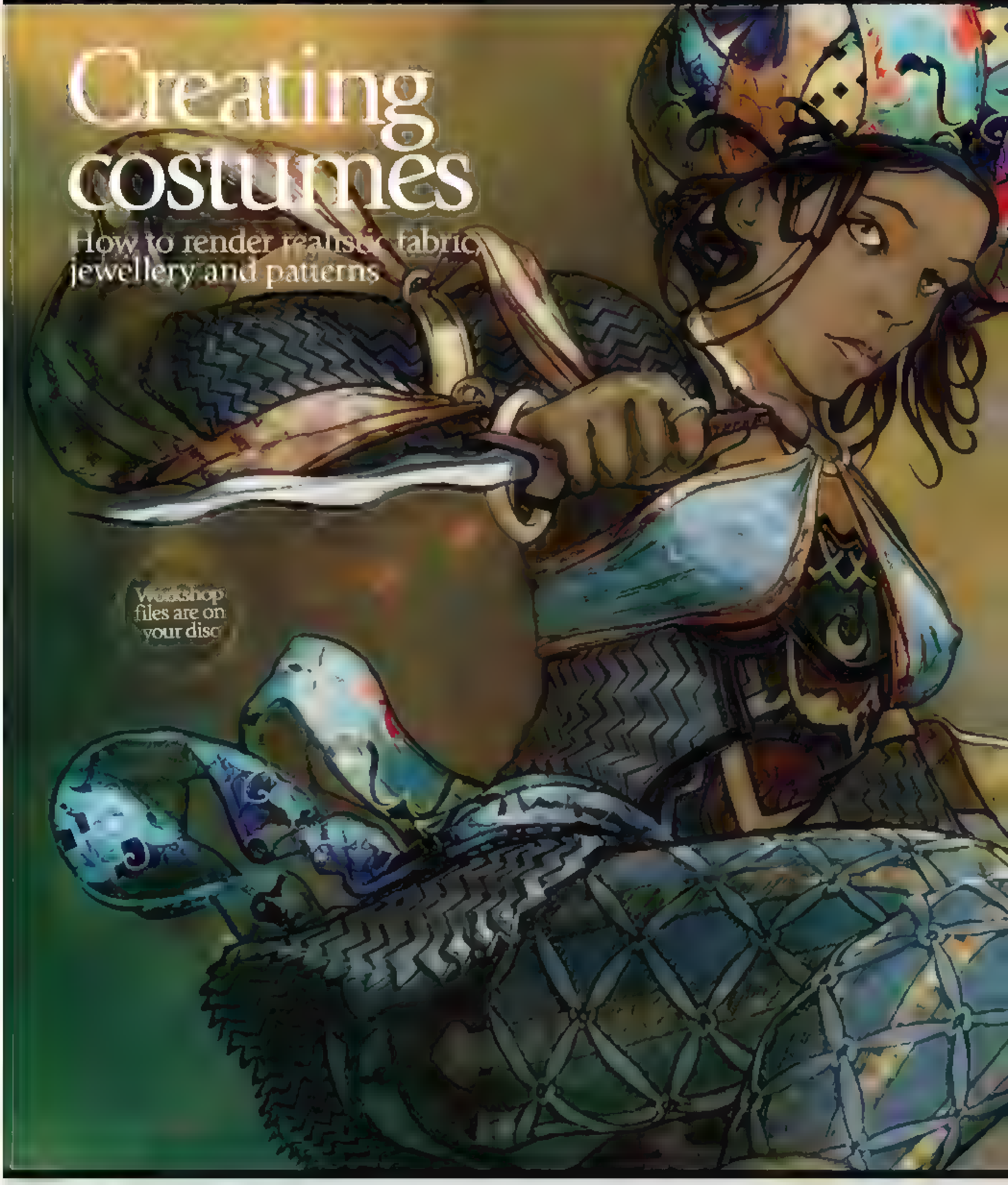
I make up one more layer and a Vivid Light effect. On this surface [illegible] different directions. I do this using a simple Round brush with a soft fringe and Vivid Light mode. It's possible to select the colours of the luminescence manually – from dark blue to white – but it takes far too much time. I also draw small pieces and patches of cloth, scattering in the direction of a gust of wind. To imitate the dynamics of these particles, I use the Motion Blur filter.

Once I finish this, I paint light yellows and oranges in the sky just behind the girl's figure and somewhere in the clouds, with sunshine lighting the body and armour. This seems to make the work complete, and gives an impression of detailed elaboration. So here it is – and to my mind, it's pretty good. I wish you luck and inspiration with your own work.



Creating costumes

How to render realistic fabric, jewellery and patterns

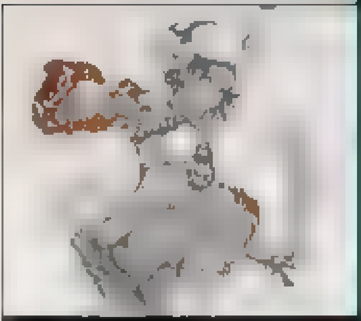


Workshop files are on your disc

> “An image with lots of drapery is awesome for this technique”
>
> David Sourwine, page 76

Your guide to costume design

Every fantasy female is defined by the clothes she wears. Think about why she's chosen her outfit, then use colour, pattern and texture to add interest and direct the eye. Use observation and reference to depict materials such as leather and satin accurately.



Create original patterns and add them to your costumes. Turn to page 76.

Workshops

Fabric and textures explained

76 Creating pattern with David Sourwine

Make your image stand out by adding your own unique fabrics.

80 Painting leather with Aly Fell

Master the technique for rendering one of the sexiest materials going.

84 Painting satin gowns with Marta Dahlig

Envelope your fantasy female in glamorous couture.

[illegible]

Photoshop

RAINBOW WARRIOR

David Sourwine explains how to easily add unique patterns on fabrics to your canvas to transform your work from the typical to the unique

Artist **PROFILE**

David Sourwine

COUNTRY: Canada

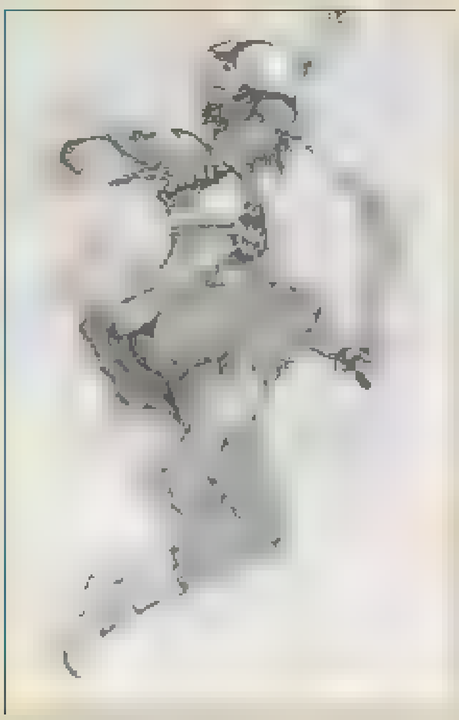
[illegible]

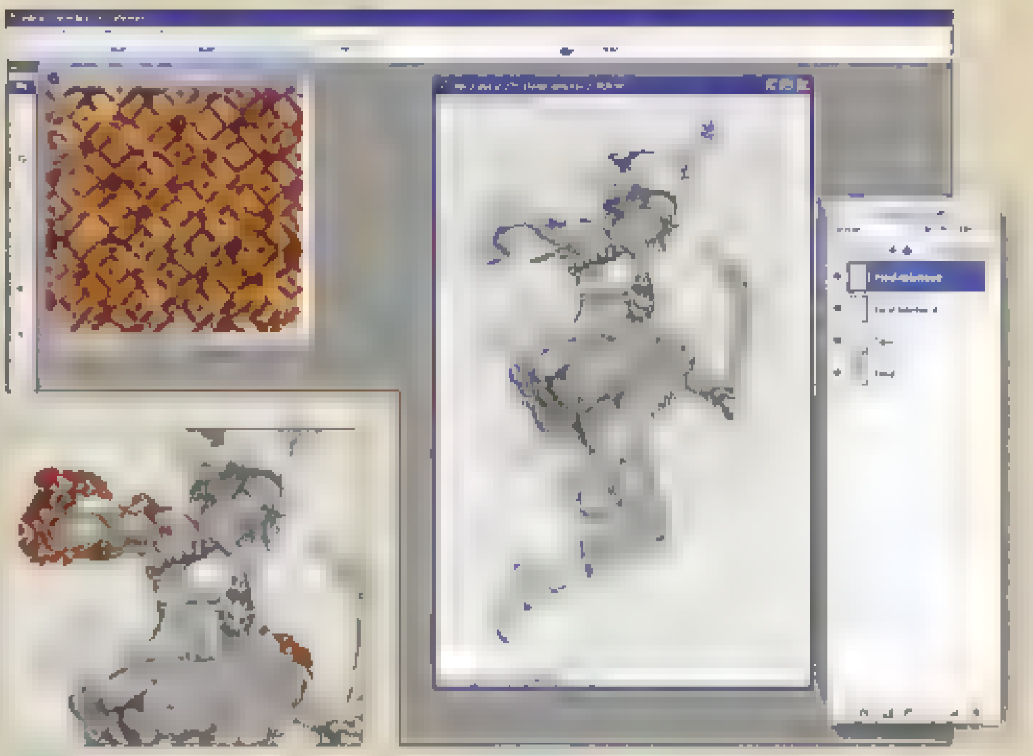
On the disc

Find a workfl[illegible] video, brushe[illegible]

Over the course of this workshop I'll be using the Stamp Tool, Transform, Layering, Colour Balance and Hue/Saturation options in Photoshop to create some fresh new images. I'll begin by creating a fabric pattern from scratch, using the Stamp Tool and adding it to a line drawing. I'll use Overlay, Multiply, Linear Light and Difference to add the patterns to my greyscale image. Next, I'll use the simple yet underrated Colour Balance options to bring both the patterns and image out in the final work.

This is a step-by-step guide for adding these techniques to your work flow, but you'll still need an eye for how far to push the percentages. Some people's lines are darker, while others sketch very light. The same goes for colour. Not everyone likes lots of saturation and a wide-ranging colour palette. Your eye will be the best judge, so please just use my percentages as a loose guide.





1 Grey tonal

I start by creating a grey tonal image. The subject matter can be anything you want, but an image with lots of drapery is awesome for this technique. I keep my tones light and stay away from black, which doesn't work well with the layering I'll be doing later. For detail, I want strong linear lines on the twists and folds of the fabrics, denoting changes in planes. When the grey tonal is complete, I flatten the layers into one

2 Existing pattern

Let's start out the easiest way: by using a pattern I already like and have to hand. I open it up in Photoshop and place it beside my grey tonal so I can see both images at the same time. Now I select the Stamp Tool (S) and click in the middle of my pattern. I move over to the fabric on the tonal, create a new layer and paint each plane of the drapery, not lifting my pen until I move to a new plane or fold

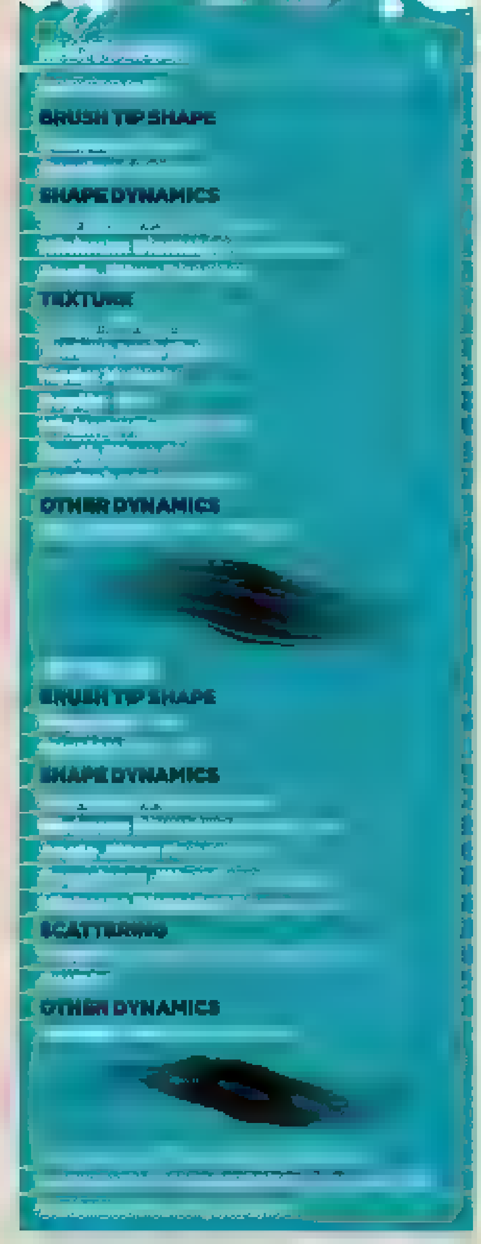
3 Layering order

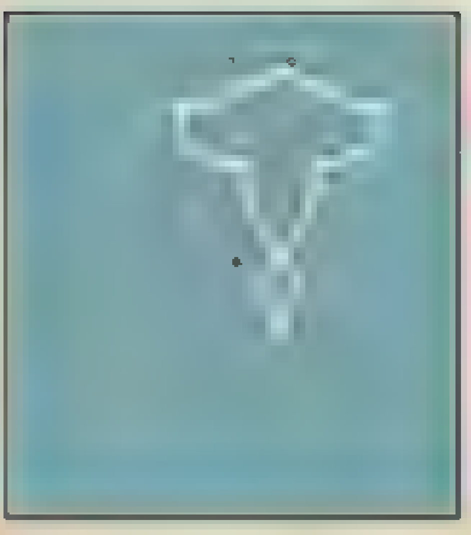
On this new fabric layer, I use the Magic Wand Tool (W) to select the blank area around it, then press Menu>Select>Inverse. In the Layers palette, I click the tonal layer, then copy and paste the selection from the tonal image twice, remembering to put the layers in the following descending order: Tonal Selection2, Tonal Selection1, Fabric and then Tonal.

4 Layering choices

Using the Layers palette, I get both the line and shading in the Tonal image working with the fabric pattern. On the Fabric layer, I select Linear Light, and set Opacity to around 76 per cent. I set Tonal Selection1 to Multiply with Opacity at 10 per cent, then set Tonal Selection2 to Overlay with Opacity at 54 per cent

WORKSHOP BRUSHES





PRO SECRETS

Correcting drawing errors

[illegible]

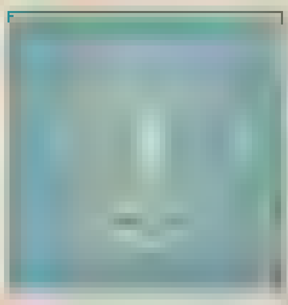
5 Creating a pattern

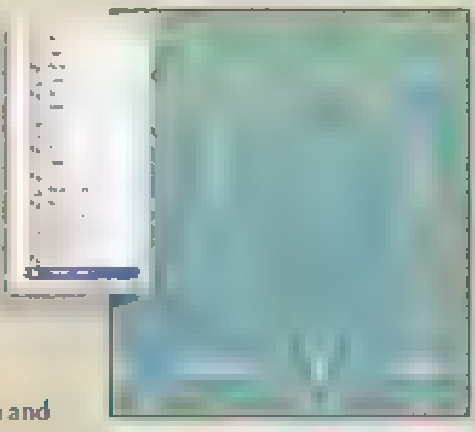
Next, I'm going to make a fabric. I create a canvas of 800x800 pixels. I turn on the grid (View>Show>Grid) and set a turquoise background colour, then start a new layer. Using the Brush Tool, I place two dots roughly six squares apart on a vertical line, and create a one-sided shape connecting the two dots. I make a copy of the layer, then flip it horizontally. With the Move Tool (V), I line up the two halves so that they are facing each other.

6 Pattern, continued

Now I select only the two line layers and merge them together. I make three copies of this layer, and rotate one 90 degrees, one 180 degrees and one 270 degrees. Using the Move Tool, I line them up on the central dot, and flatten the four line layers together. I hide the layer by clicking on its eye icon in the Layers palette.

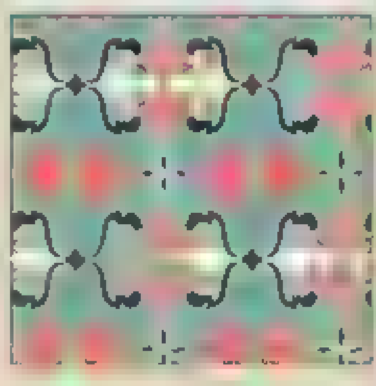
To create a fancy pattern, I need to repeat the entire process. Using a different colour for the brush line, I place the dots and create a different simple shape, then rotate it as before, remembering to flatten the layers together when I've finished.





7 Finalising the pattern

I take the white line pattern and duplicate it several times. Using the Move Tool, I line them up so the ends and sides are just touching. Still using the Move Tool, I select the second pattern to offset it. I move it so that it sits nicely with the repeated shapes I've already made. Repeating the process from before, I copy the second shape and line the copies up. The final result is a new pattern.

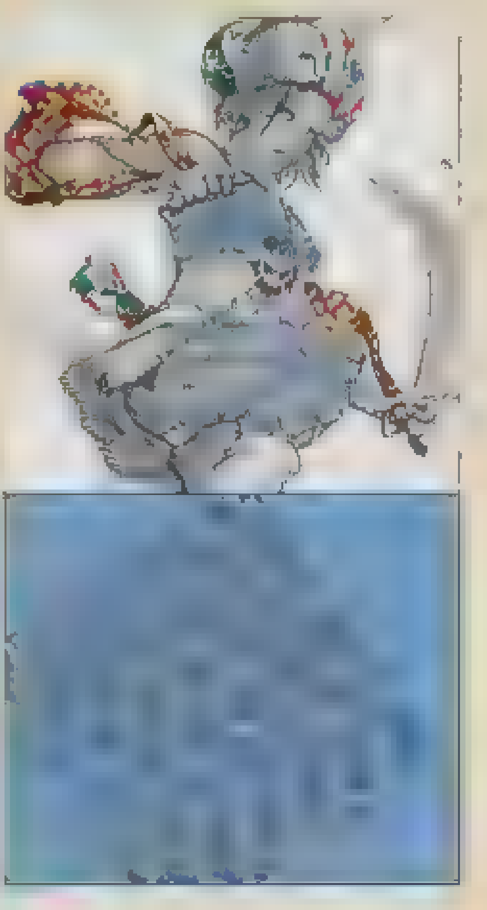


8 Colouring the pattern

Now all the linework is overlapping and creating different shapes. There are a lot of layers at this point, so I flatten all the layers apart from the background together. I create a new layer under the linework and start filling in shapes that I like, using black, red and cream colours. I flatten the entire image when I'm done. I now have a pattern that can be used over and over again.

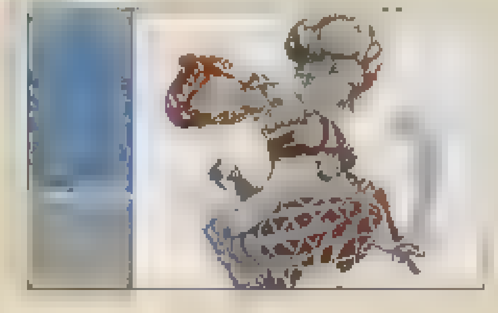
9 Back to the work

Returning to my tonal image, I use the Stamp Tool to add further patterns to other fabric areas, remembering to make a new layer for each different pattern I add. Each time I add a pattern area, I click the empty space around it and create an inverse selection. Repeating the steps I followed with the original pattern, I create the three layers: Tonal Selection2 (Overlay at 54 per cent), Tonal Selection1 (Multiply at 100 per cent) and Fabric (Linear Light at 76 per cent). I do this for each separate pattern until all areas on the artwork are complete.



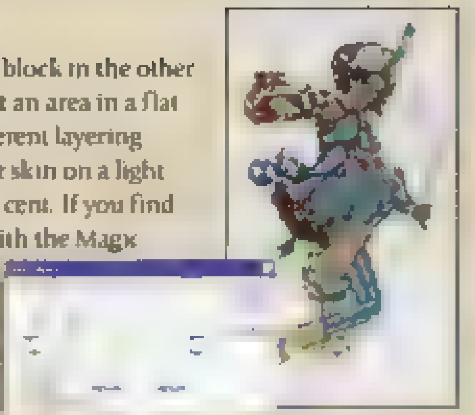
10 Extra tips

Now you have the hang of creating and filling in your patterns, let's expand on it a bit. You will notice that the patterns usually run horizontally or vertically, creating a kind of wallpapery look. I make them a bit more organic by using Menu>Image>Rotate Canvas >Arbitrary. Type any number in the box, and it will rotate by that many degrees clockwise. You can also reverse your pattern's colours and values by changing Tonal Selection1. For a totally different look for the pattern, I like to select Tonal Selection1 to change the blending mode from Multiply to Difference.



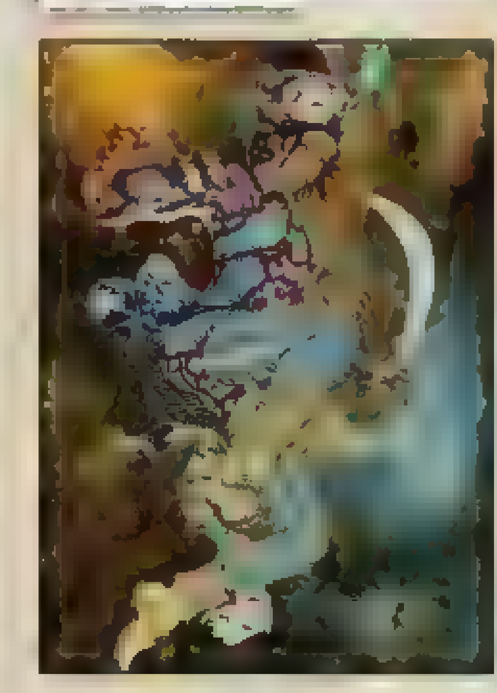
11 Block in the rest

Now that the fabric areas are all filled, block in the other parts of the character on separate layers. Paint an area in a flat colour, then blend it into the tonal using different layering options. For metal I like to use Hard Light, for skin on a light tonal, I like a Multiply with Opacity at 60 per cent. If you find the area gets too dark, select the flat colour with the Magic Wand Tool, copy the background tonal layer and paste it into a new layer. Put the new layer on top of the flat-colour layer. Set its blending mode to Overlay and adjust Opacity to suit.



12 Background

I start a new layer for the background. Using rough brush tips, I block in the background, picking colours from the patterns. When I'm finished, I turn off the layer's visibility off, and flatten the visible layers into one by pressing Shift+Ctrl+E. I don't like to throw any layers away in case I need to change something later, so I select the newly flattened layer, press Ctrl+A to select all, then make a copy and undo the flattening by pressing Ctrl+Alt+Z two or three times. I paste the copy from the clipboard into a new layer on top, flatten the layer and remove the background from it using the Magic Wand and Eraser Tools. Now I go back to the background layer and turn the visibility on.



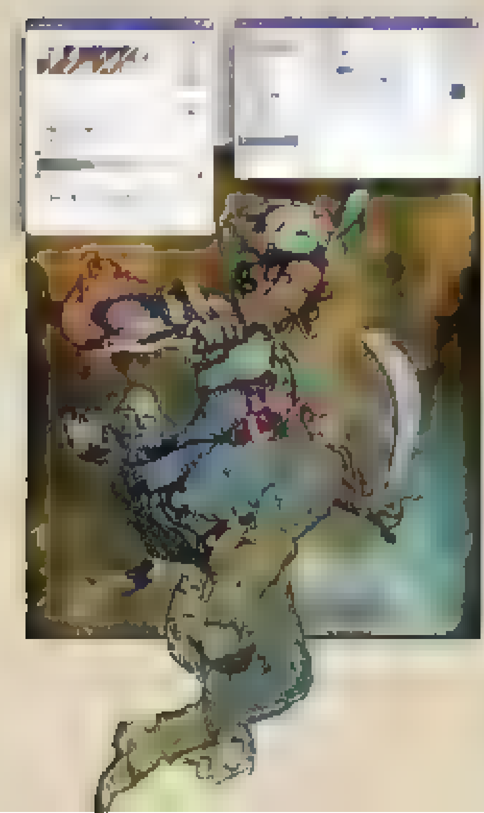
PRO SECRETS

Save all layers

[illegible]

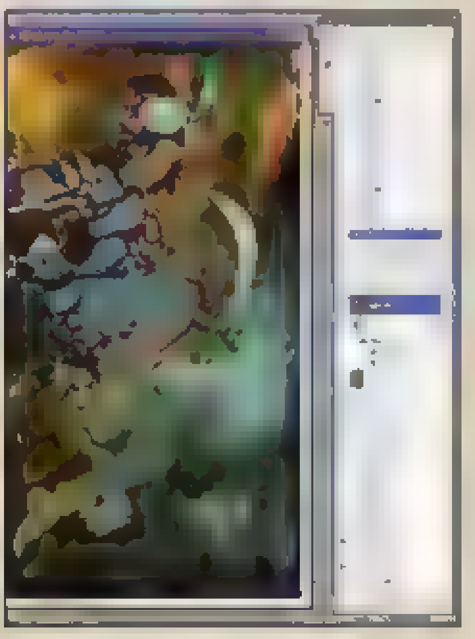
13 Blending

Sometimes you'll find that there's a jagged grey line around the foreground character. To get rid of it, right-click the Flatten Character layer and select Blending Options. Enable Inner Glow and change Blend Mode to Hard Light, with Opacity at 100 and Size at 16px. Click the colour box and change it to a very dark red. Next, enable Gradient Overlay. Change Blend Mode to Multiply and set Opacity to 45. Click the Gradient graphic and change black to dark green and white to turquoise. Change Opacity for the turquoise to 0.



14 Surface blur

I love the Surface Blur filter: if your picture looks a bit scratchy, it lets you bring everything together. I flatten everything and copy it. Then I undo the flattening using Ctrl+Alt+Z and paste the clipboard into a new layer on top. On the pasted layer, I select Menu>Filter>Blur >Surface Blur, setting Radius to 32 and Threshold to 38. The background just got softer, but so did the character. So I take the Eraser Tool and pick a soft-edged tip to erase the parts on the Blur layer I want in focus. The non-blurred layer will show through these erased areas.



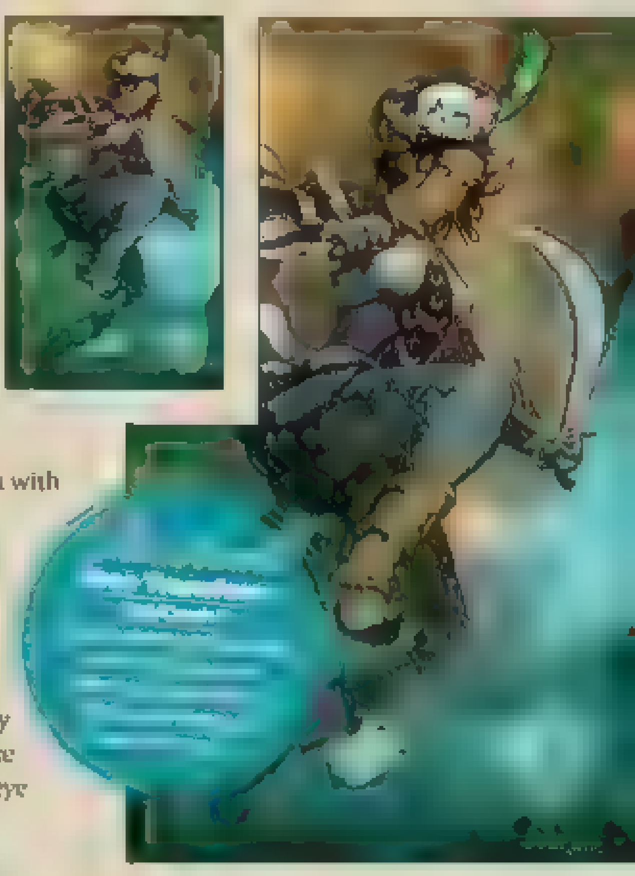
15 Adding contrast

You may find that your image is too dark or has lost too much of the line work you had. If this has happened, copy the original grey tonal layer. Put it on top and change the blending mode from Normal to Hard Light, with Opacity at about 30 per cent. Next, add shadows by creating a new layer on top and switching it to Multiply with Opacity at around 30-50 per cent, painting over those areas with a dark grey. This will keep all your old work while darkening its values. Don't forget to flatten everything afterwards.

16 Colour balance

I duplicate the flattened image, and use Menu>Layer> Duplicate Layer to take the top layer. Now I change the colour settings of it with Menu>Image> Adjustments >Colour Balance. I like a warm versus cold approach, so I increase cyan and green with the slider bars.

On the cool colour layer, I use a soft-tipped Eraser at about 60 per cent Opacity to remove the parts I want to keep warm. This is a quick way to add focus to the picture by drawing the viewer's eye to the warm colours.



17 Finishing up

I just use the skill of my own eyes for the next part. With the Brush Tool, I darken up any lines that seem too light or that I think should be more crisp. Next I zoom in to 100 per cent and scan over the patterns, making sure I have no jagged edges. If any appear, I take the Smudge Tool (R) and softly smooth out the rough or pixellated edges. Finally, you can flip the image horizontally, using Menu>Image >Rotate Canvas>Flip Canvas Horizontal to take a fresh look and see if you missed some drawing problems. If it still looks good, it's done ●

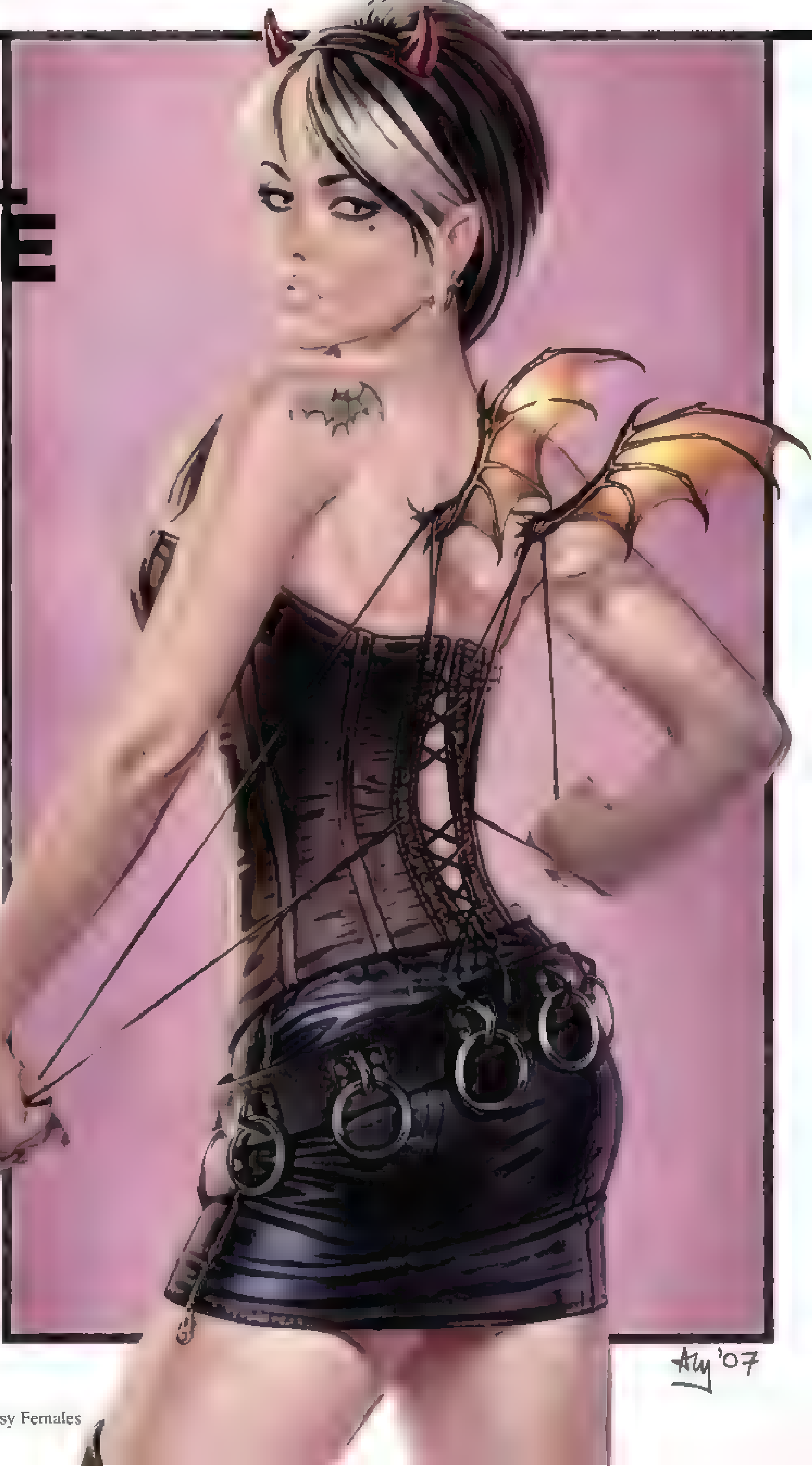
[illegible]

DEVIL INSIDE HER

[illegible] shows you how to paint creases, folds and texture as he creates a leather and satin-clad fantasy female using hard and wet-edged brushes...

Reproducing cloth and material is always much more fun when it's shiny. But highly textured gloss fabrics are very different depending on their surface and light reflectivity. A common mistake when painting leather is to make it too shiny and glossy – more like PVC. Leather tends to have more of a matt finish, so exercising restraint with highlighting can reap benefits in the final image, as tempting as it might be to shiny things up.

My approach to fabrics such as leather and satin leans towards a stylised look, but can nevertheless produce satisfying results. So here I'm going to take you through my process of creating an image from scratch, concentrating on the two main textural elements within it: the skirt and the corset.



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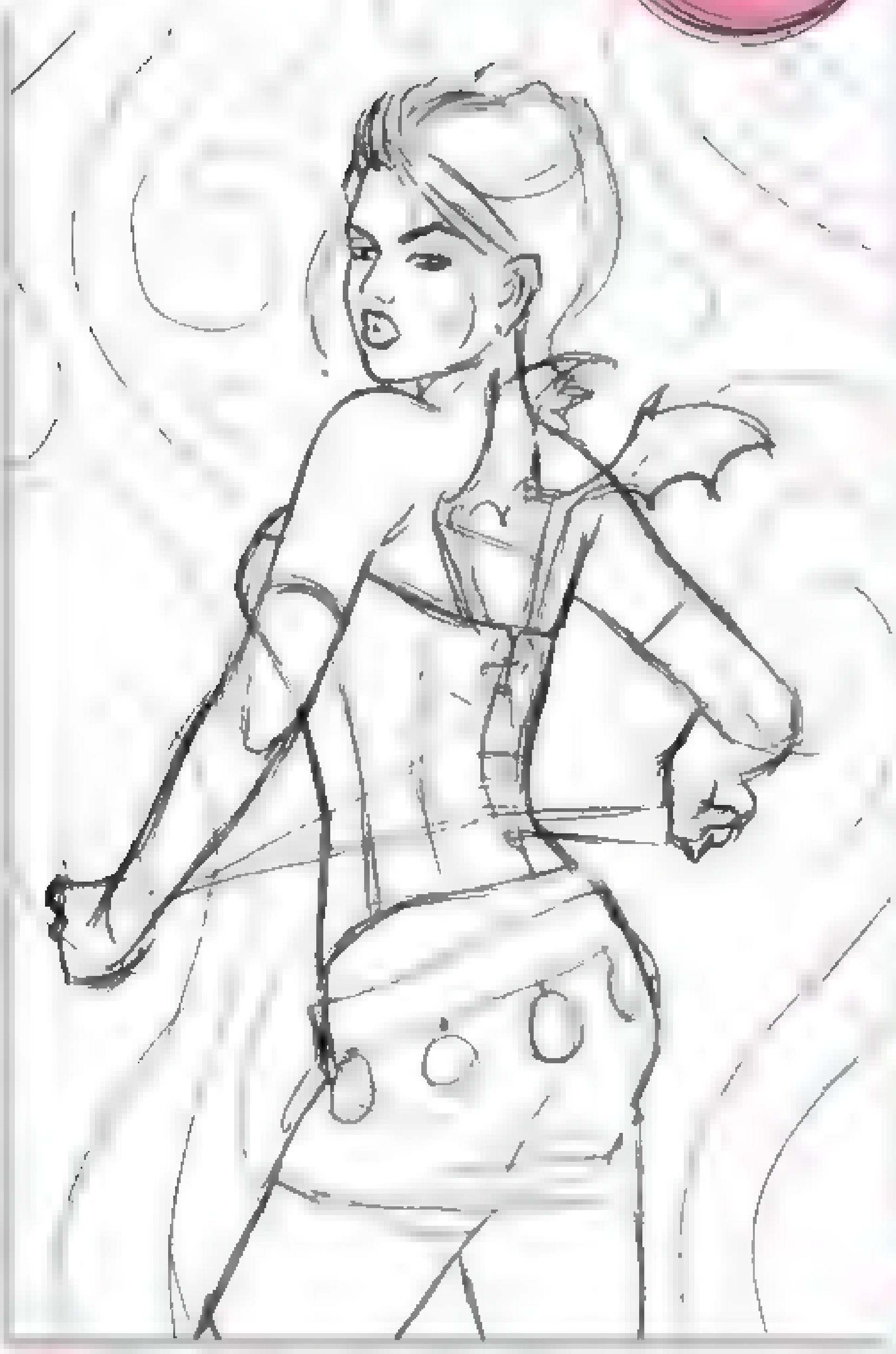
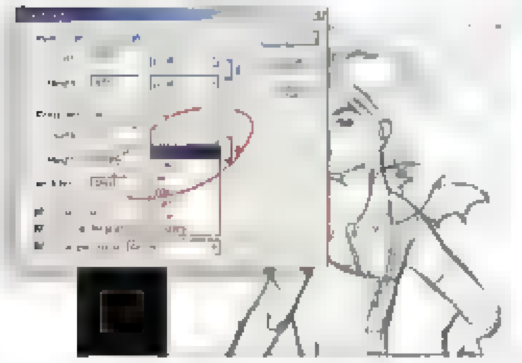


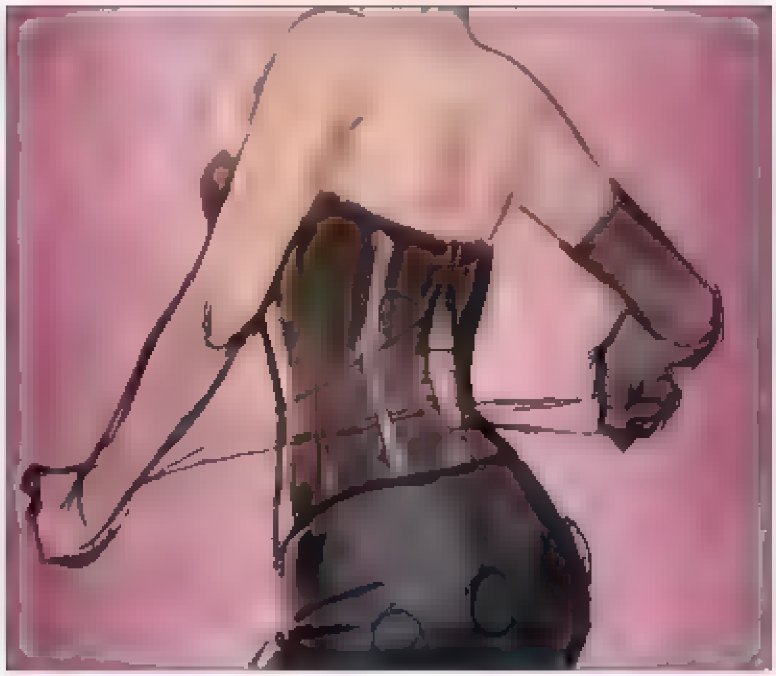
Sketching

First I create a new document at 150 pixels per inch: it's quite small, but enables me to sketch with more immediacy. I sketch with the Conte Pencil with Shape Dynamics and Other Dynamics on to get some decent thicks and thins. I then crop my composition down to a comfortable size. In this case, it ends up at 567x877 – not a very 'neat' size, but as this is a sketch, I'll be upsizing it, so it doesn't matter.



The image

With this being purely a leather exercise, I've decided not to dwell too long on the background and concentrate purely on the figure – in this case a female pin-up who's been naughty. Whatever power that controls these things has given her demonic wings to mark her out as devilish. When my sketch is finished, I double the image's size.



Starting to paint

I often start painting by creating a layer set to Multiply over the linework. This way, I can still see the line through the colour I lay down. On this occasion, however, I sketched on a separate layer and applied the paint to the background. Each way is as valid as the other, as long as the linework is visible.

Initially, I'm using simple brushes: the Conte Pencil I mentioned before and a Hard Round brush with Wet Edges enabled and Spacing set to 10 per cent. Using Wet Edges requires more overpainting for deeper opacity, but provides a more natural painted feel.

Body colour

The dominance of pink in this painting dictates the colour balance of the final image: everything will have pink in it to a lesser or greater degree. That's why when I make a mark with a new colour over the base pink, I colour-pick the blend with the Eyedropper Tool and use the resulting colour. This trick is also useful for blending when using harder-edged brushes, and becomes more intuitive as you paint.

Avoid the Airbrush as much as you can, unless you're actually going for an airbrushed look. With the Airbrush, it's difficult to avoid overblending, which can result in a muddy feel. I also use the wet-edged Hard Round brush with a texture such as Plastic Wrap Light for elements of the image, such as the background. »

Artist

PROFILE

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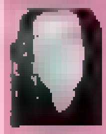

[illegible] video games industry for [illegible] [illegible] working mostly for Cosgrove Ha[illegible]

On the [illegible]

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PRO SECRETS

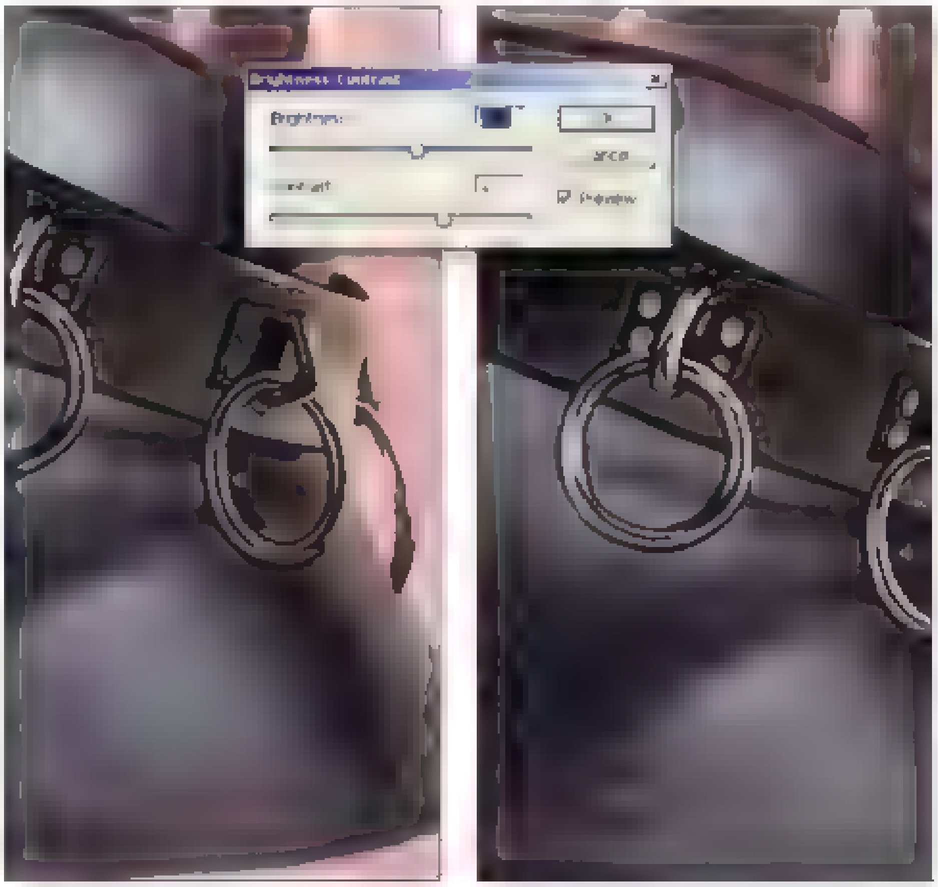
[illegible]

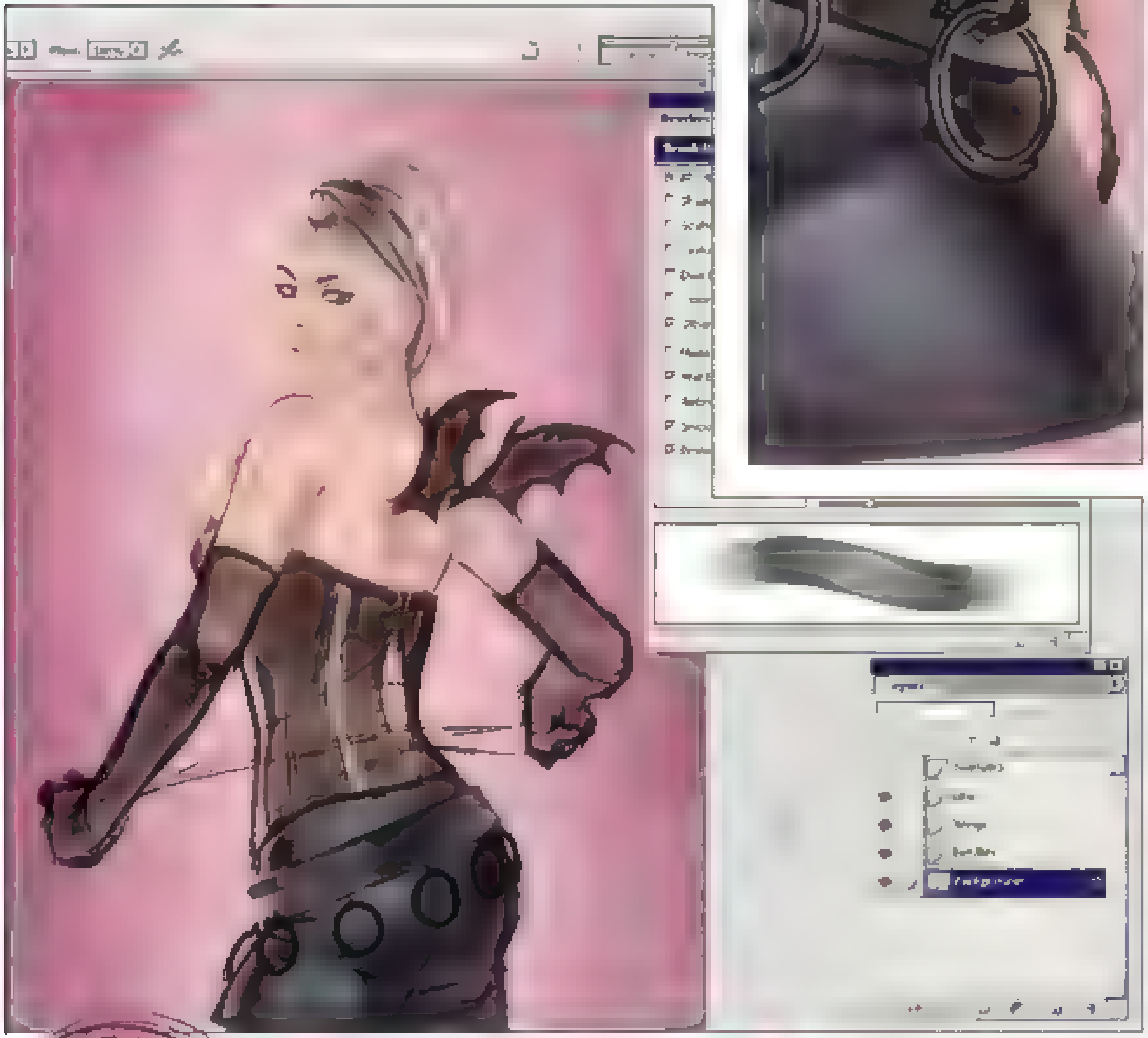
Working with layers

As I work, I often create a new layer over the background if I'm unsure about a decision or a mark I'm making. This is a useful way of working, but can be quite distracting in that it restricts the spontaneity of the working process. Traditional painting has none of these options, and the happy accidents that result from moving on from a mistake happen less if you control the working process too much. It's therefore wise to flatten your working layers as often as possible, if only to keep your scratch disk happy! I had intended with this image to keep the character on a separate layer over the background, but choose to merge layers early on. The linework remains separate, and I erase this as I progressed.

Detail

I won't spend too long on the painting process of the character herself, as this tutorial isn't primarily concerned with that. Because she isn't too realistic and has a cartoony pin-up feel, I keep my style relatively simple. Detail is concentrated in the face, the wings, the belt and the accessories. I decide to remove the gloves to simplify the composition and spend some time on drawing the hands. I need some reference for the hands, as the posing wasn't as straightforward as I originally intended, so I photograph my own hands for a guide.





The belt

I look at a couple of Goth belts for the metal hoops and zoom in quite close to fiddle with the detail. With metal, it's important to keep a healthy contrast so that it has nice sharp edges. Painting the metal on a separate layer, I adjust the Brightness/Contrast slightly and it suddenly jumps out.

Starting the leather

Once I'm happy with the girl, I move on to the clothes. Starting on the skirt, I create a new layer under the belt for my basic first pass. First, though, look at some leather, and decide on the kind of material you're going to paint. The texture of leather differs depending on what it's being used for. Skirt leather is thin, soft and supple, and creases and folds more readily compared to boot leather.

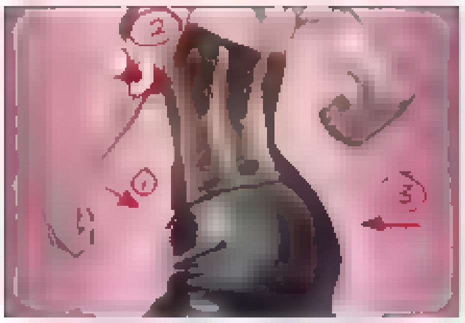
Much of the final look is dependant on highlighting. A common mistake in highlighting leather is to make the edges too sharp and contrasty, which projects a plasticky texture. Softer highlights, meanwhile, can lack coarseness and look too rubbery. Leather is a happy medium, and the highlighting is dependant on the surface texture and the decisions you make over its purpose.

Living with mistakes

The other problematic element to working with layers is remembering to paint on the right one – discovering you've painted on one you didn't intend to can be frustrating to say the least, so be careful what you're doing! Photoshop can be very forgiving in these situations, and you can amend the mistake if your History options allow, but the best thing to do is just go with it. If you're flattening your layers at regular intervals, it shouldn't matter in the long term.

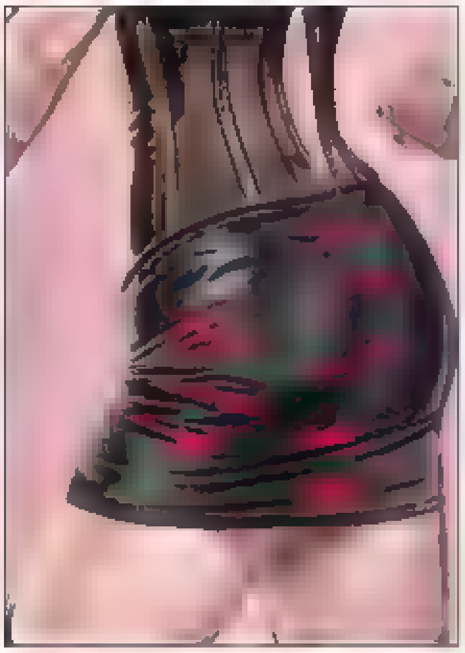
Reference

There's no stigma attached to using reference: every artist does to a lesser or greater degree. Life drawing itself is a form of reference and one of the best references of the human form that you have is yourself. Animators sit with a mirror next to their desks so they can draw themselves gurning in different expressions to use in their drawing. The thing is to take guidance from your reference and not copy it: incorporate the inspiration it gives, not the literal likeness.



Light source

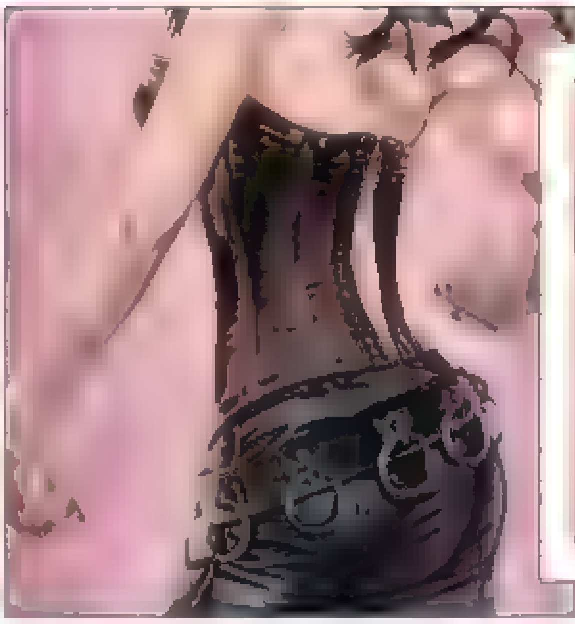
I start with a basic pass to indicate the light direction and reveal the basic form of the body beneath. As you can see her bum, which is round, the basic highlights will be quite smooth. There are three main light sources in this image: the strong, more intense one from the front of the girl, which creates a rim light, a secondary, less strong one from almost the point of view of the observer; and a third subdued one (a bit of a cheat) to bring out the curve of her behind. At the moment, I'm using the Hard Round brush with Wet Edges activated.



Creases

When drawing creases and folds, it's important to consider the underlying form. Leather emphasises and exaggerates the shape more than most materials. When the leg bends forward, the underside of the bottom is where the creases will show most. As the bend becomes more extreme, the creases compact more. The creases here spread out from where the thigh meets the body. At this point, I switch to a more textured Hard Round brush for greater roughness.

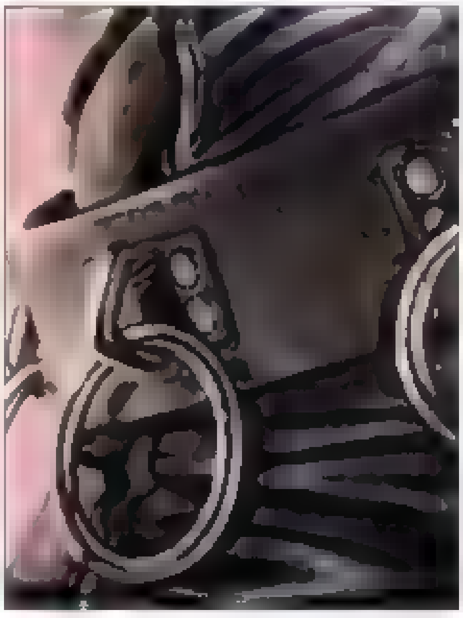
Every fold and crease reacts to the light. It has a top and a bottom and casts its own shadow on the folds around it. As they curve around an underlying form the shadows will deepen into the darker area. As a secondary light source catches the folds, the shadows will then react to the light, and the former lighted area will blend into shadow.



The corset

Putting aside the skirt for the moment, I get on with the corset, which I've make satin to show the difference between different types of tactile materials. Satin reflects light in a similar way to leather, but has a completely different feel. It's smoother, and its highlights curve more softly than leather as a result. However, the material is taut round a corset, so the majority of creases here are stretched straight, tight and horizontal, rather than running vertically.

Folds and creases in general follow a simple rule: placed under a tension of some kind, they go with that tension. When relaxed, they 'drape' and gather, and tend to smooth out when following a form beneath.



Roughing it up

Going back to the belt, I use the rougher Hard Round brush along the edges to make it look worn. Using the same brush, I also squiggle marks over the surface with a lighter colour. While an aged result is easier to arrive at by using texture overlays, working at a surface with a dual brush or texture brush gives you much greater satisfaction.

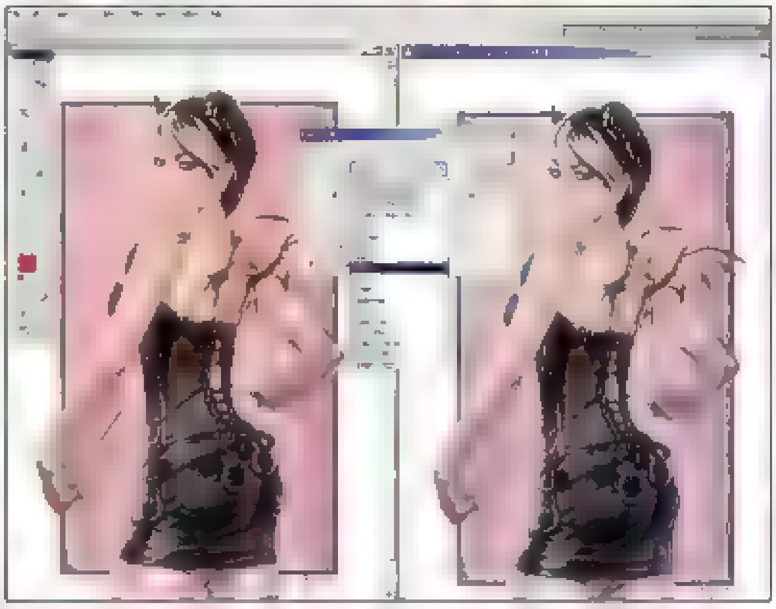
PRO SECRETS

[illegible]

Highlighting

I make a final size adjustment to the image, and double the pixel count from 150 per inch to 300. I can now make the final tweaks and touch up the detailing. On the wings I add a few more highlights and draw in the corset strings, tangling them up with the wings. I do my final highlighting on a separate layer above the others. Filling the layer with black, I set the blending mode to Colour Dodge. The black becomes clear. Using a soft brush very lightly with a colour close to the dominant light colour, I paint on that layer over areas I want to 'bloom' or highlight, and they brighten up. I also add a tattoo

The tattoo imitates her wings, further accentuating her devilish nature



16 Final decisions

I'd wanted to do a swirly, patterned background all along. After doing a quick rough of the original plan, though, I decide I don't like it and go for just a simple box design, blocking out much of the pink behind the girl and framing her more strongly. I edge it with a darker line and add a bit of distress to it with the textured brush. I flatten the remaining layers and adjust the overall colour using the Photo Filter (Image>Adjustments>Photo Filter), bringing up the violet by selecting Cyan and fading it off with the slider bar till I'm happy with it. A quick tweak up of Contrast by 7 points, and the image is done.

Shortcuts
Toggle screen mode
F (Mac and PC)
This shortcut enables you to quickly and easily switch between various screen modes in Photoshop.

Artist **PROFILE**
Marta Dahlig
COUNTRY: Poland
See more of Marta's work at her website www.marta-dahlig.com

On the disc
Find screenshots and Photoshop files in Creating Ravene inside Costumes

Painter & Photoshop

A GOWN FOR RAVENE

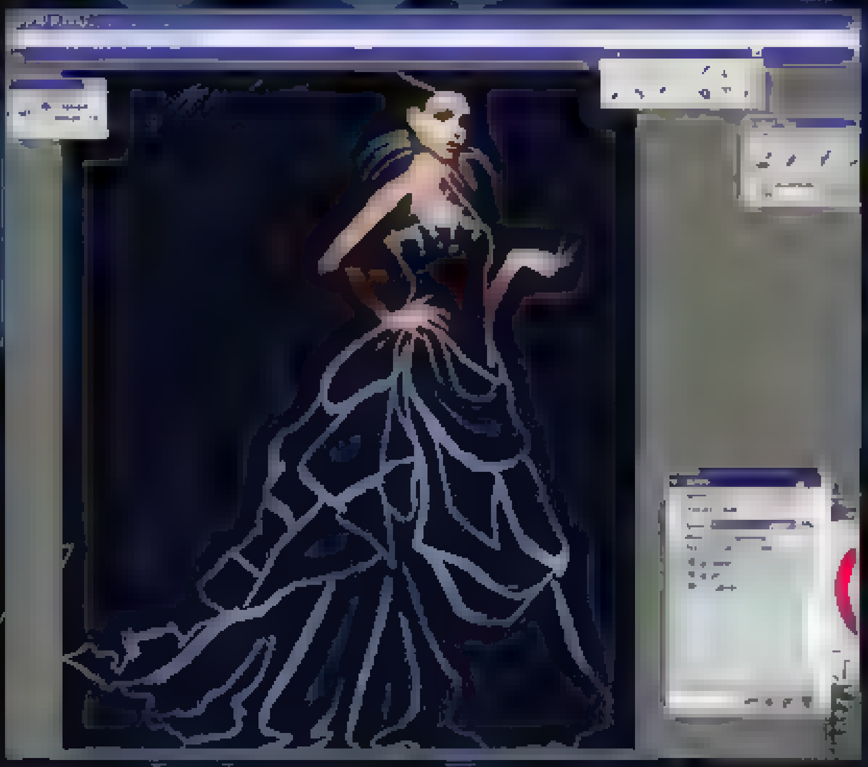
Learn the process of painting fabric, embroidery and lace, from a basic sketch to final colouring, with **Marta Dahlig**

Successful material painting is a real skill. The final effect depends on many elements, the most important of them being the kind of textile. Each material, such as velvet, linen, silk or taffeta, has its own distinctive qualities and requires special techniques. Also, different lighting and folds can change the result.

Over the following six pages, I'll explain the essential steps necessary to create a satin dress, including designing and draping as well as colouring, highlighting and shading. I'm also going to describe the specific texture of this textile and ways of achieving it with various brushes. Furthermore, I'll show you the process of creating embroidery and lace, which is extremely useful for enhancing and decorating gowns.

To use the tutorial to its fullest, you'll need professional painting software such as Painter or Photoshop, and to own a graphics tablet like a Wacom Intuos.

I created the tutorial image in Painter 7 with the Tinting brush set imported from Painter 6, but it's possible to achieve the same effects in both Painter and Photoshop. I'll share tips for both programs throughout the painting process.



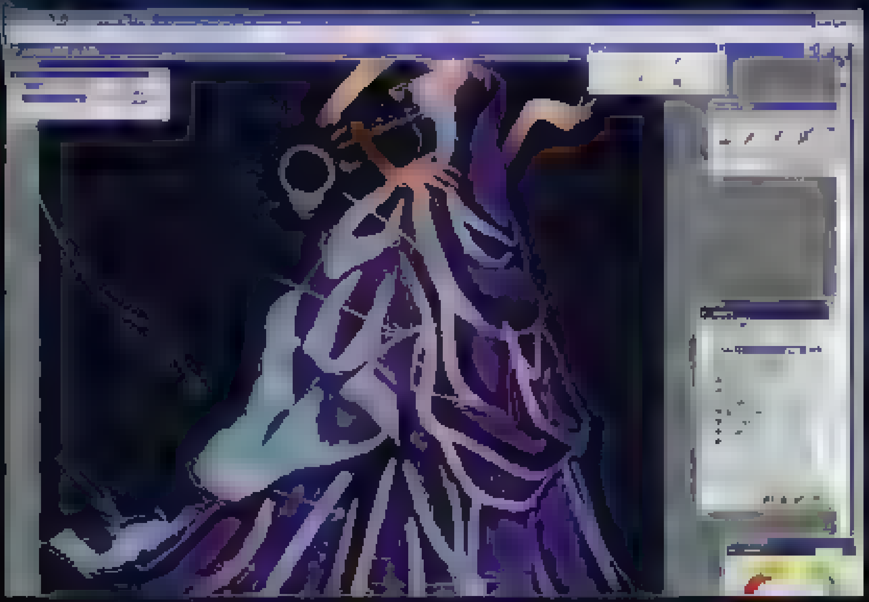
1 Create a character

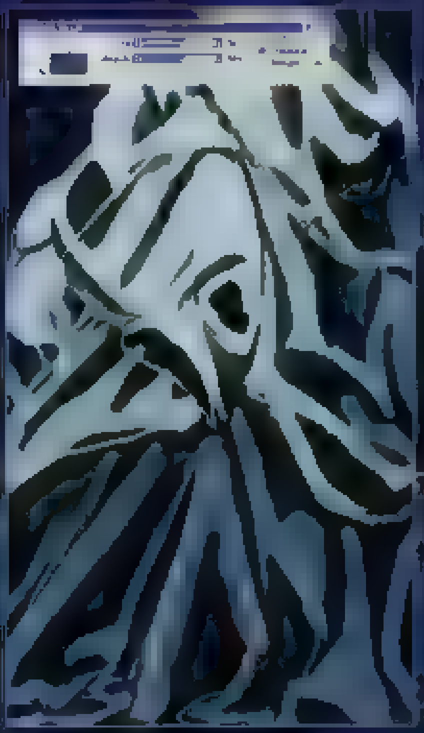
I find that it's easiest to design a dress on top of an already painted character, so create a figure first or open up a file with your character. Create a new layer on top of it and, after choosing any brush you like and a colour (preferably contrasting with the background), sketch the basic look of your gown. When designing the drapery, remember to vary the size and shape of folds to make them look more interesting.

2 Layer and light

Create a layer on top of the sketch and mark the convexity of the folds (the red lines below). In draped dresses, the most convex areas are the tops of the folds and the edges of their curvature. Since the material has thickness and stiffness, the edges are thick as well, so mark this on your sketch, too.

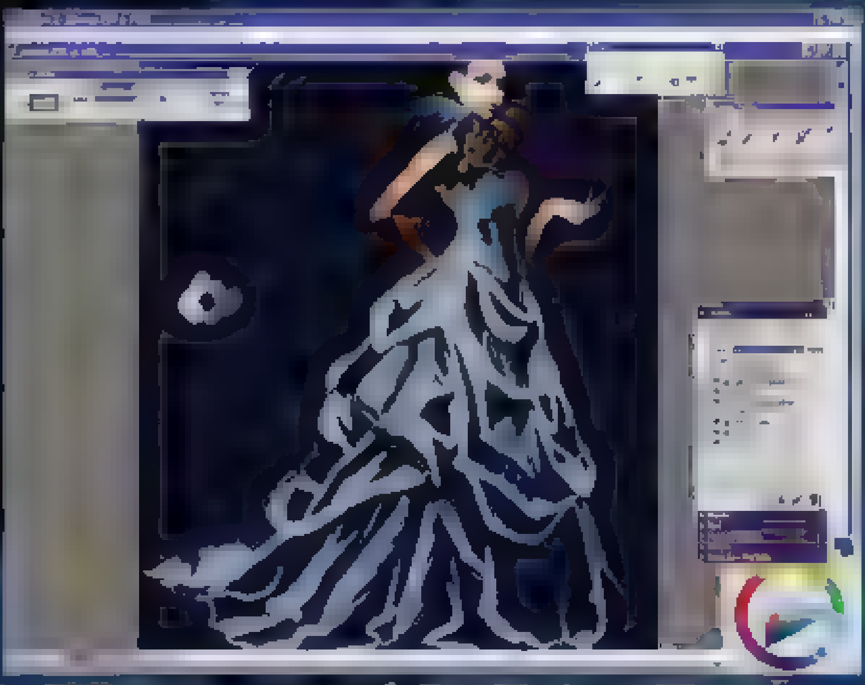
Now choose a light source. It's easier to shade when the lighting point is between the side and the front of your character. The most convex areas are also the most highlighted. Create a layer on top of the convexity and sketch the highlights (the light transparent shapes). Now, paint some shadows (the violet shapes). These are usually between and under the most convex areas. If you chose a side light source, remember the opposite part has to be darker.





3 Defining shapes

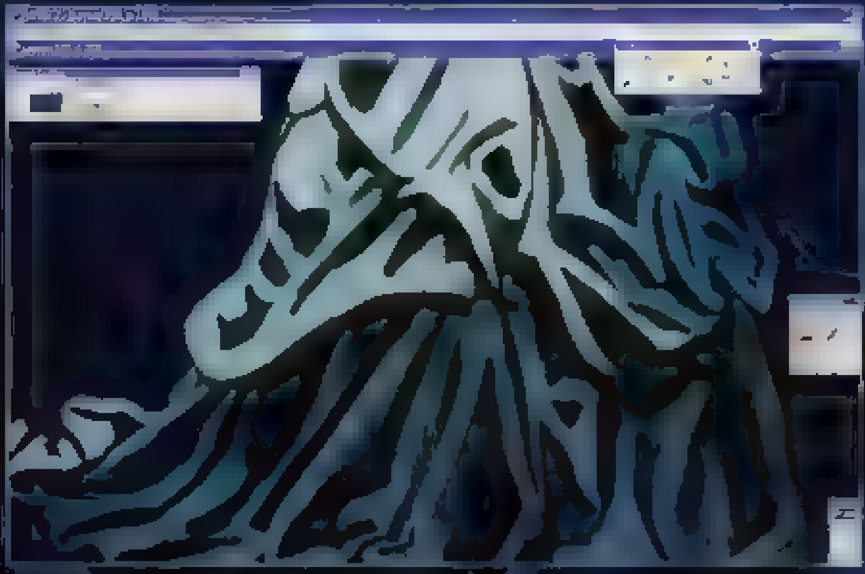
It's now time to finalise the design of your drapery. Create a new layer under the sketch. Now, according to the convexity and lighting scheme you designed, push the sketch further, marking the general thickness of the folds and defining their shapes. Keep the light source in mind all the time, making the correct parts of the dress respectively darker. When you're ready, put on some colours that you want to use for the dress.



4 Brush choices

Now start applying colours. Create a new layer below the first sketch, but above the one from the previous step.

Using both sketches and your colour palette as a reference, block out some basic colours for your gown. The tool you use is really important. Avoid airbrushes; they would disturb the creation of a nice texture. Instead, pick something with rough edges, like the Basic Round brush from Tinting in Painter, or a Hard Round brush in Photoshop. Use the brushes at a medium opacity (40-60 per cent) to enable the colours to blend.



5 Blending colours

Now, let's focus on the lower part of the dress. First, blend the difference between the heights and depths of the folds. If you own Painter, use a Blender brush; in Photoshop, simply apply a low-opacity Hard Round brush on top of the contrasting areas repeatedly. Don't use any kinds of smear or smudge tools, as they will only take away the texture you're trying to create.

Remember to work on enriching the colour palette as you go: shading with a hue different than your midtone (for example, shading a blue dress with violet or green) will dramatically improve the look of your gown. For this, use a low-opacity (5-10 per cent) brush – either your current tool or an airbrush. Remember that after applying colours of another hue, you should blend them in immediately to make the hue transition look natural.

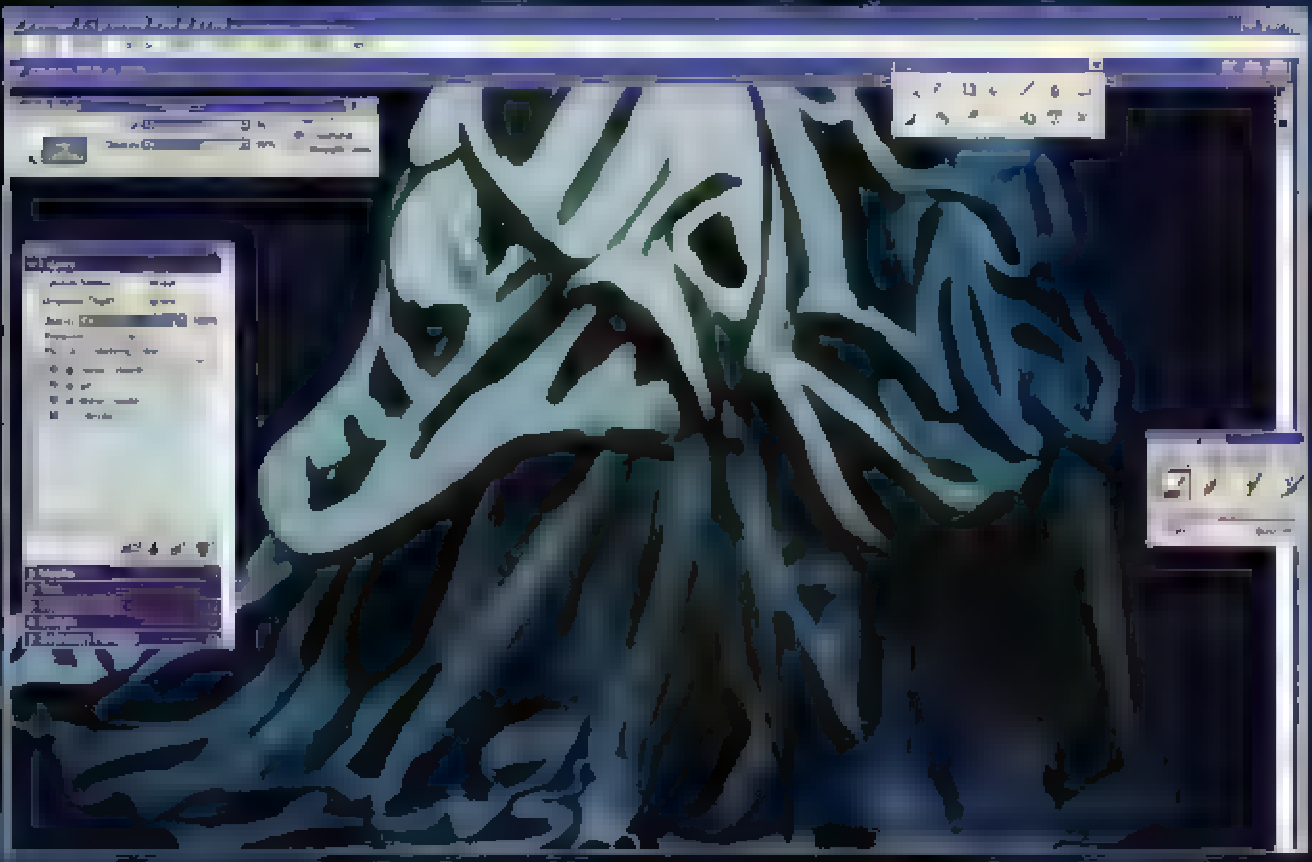
6 Soften the folds

Continue blending the folds until the transition between all the colours seems quite smooth. In

PRO SECRETS

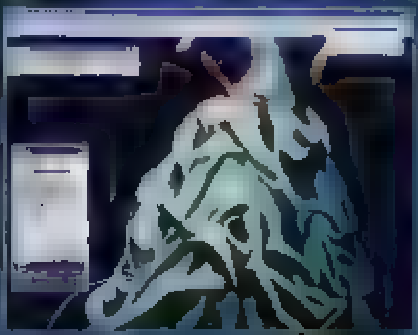
Understanding textiles

If you're new to digital art, find an easy sort of textile to start painting (a tablecloth, say) and experiment with different draping and lighting to understand the structure of the folds. If needed, take some reference photos to learn from later, but remember that drawing from nature is better when possible



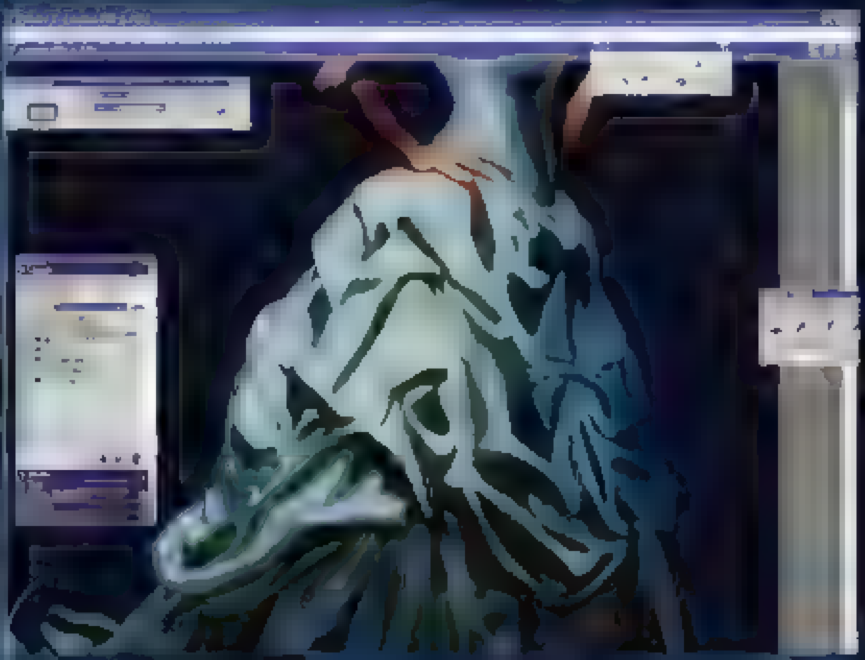
addition to the Basic Round/Hard Round, you can also apply some opaque strokes with an Airbrush/Soft Brush. Photoshoppers can also blend with a Spackled Brush that's made out of many small dots.

Since satin isn't a stiff textile, most of the freefall folds won't be as straight as marked on the sketch. Break the 'belly' of each fold by darkening some areas or making discontinuous highlights. It's easier to add finishing retouches with the full context, so let's move on.



7 Highlights and shadow

For the draped part of the dress, concentrate on making the difference between highlights and shadows more subtle. If the material is draped, you achieve this effect by lightening the dark areas and adding some shadows to the highlighted folds, instead of blending the transitions.



8 Satin textures

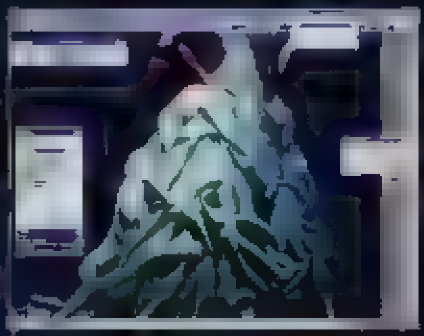
Let's start working on the textures, to make the dress look like satin. You should keep in mind that in this textile, the colour transitions are smooth, but the transition zone itself should be very narrow. The highlights on satin are thin but strong and have rather hard, well defined edges, directly surrounded by darker areas.

Keeping this in mind, add some subtle shadows around the convex areas of the dress, which make the edges of the highlights. Also, make the folds stronger by adding some shadows. For this task, I'd recommend using the Basic Round brush in Painter or a Hard Round brush in Photoshop.

9 Change colours

Continue by choosing a colour of a different hue than your midtone, and adding highlights based on the convexity and lighting sketch you made at the start. Remembering the qualities of satin as you work, add a highlight with a brush with well-defined edges. (Smooth Ink Pen or Basic Round in Painter; Hard Round or similar in Photoshop.) Don't use pure white or pure grey for shading, as those tend to give an artificial look.

If you make some shadows very dark, they give an impression of the fold being extremely curved. Don't use this trick too much, though.



10 Get blending

Remembering that the transitions should be thin but smooth, blend the colours with a Blender brush, if you've got Painter, or a low-opacity (5-15 per cent) Hard Round brush, if you use Photoshop. Continue detailing the many folds by giving them some additional highlights and shadows.

Enrich the colour palette by breaking the existing colours with other hues. Also, avoid keeping too many layers at a time by merging them often.

11 And again...

More of the same! Just continue blending the same way as before, until the colour transitions feel quite smooth. Try to differentiate the shadows. The shade that separates the convex and highlighted areas should be the lightest; the shadow on the folds that fade into darkness should

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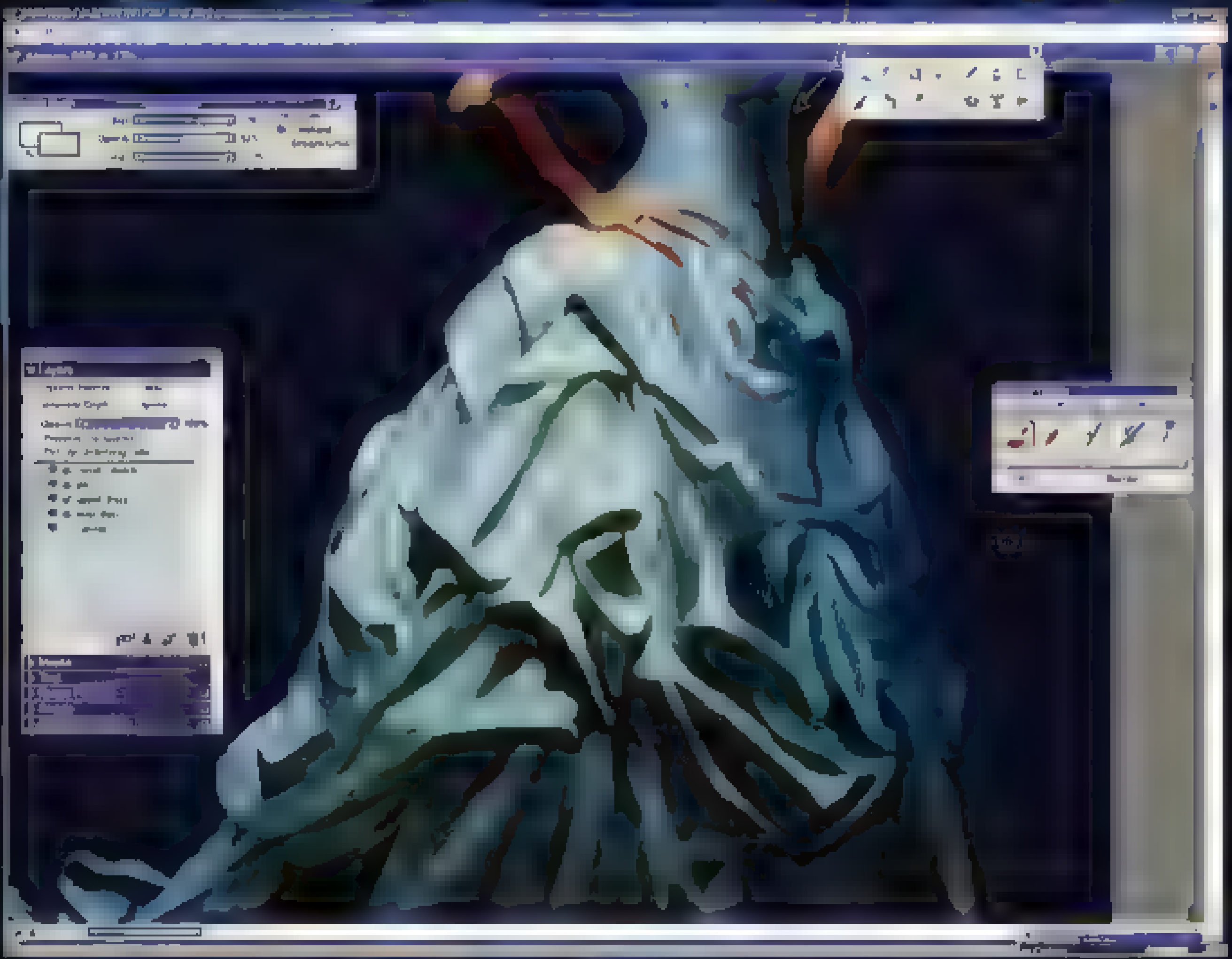
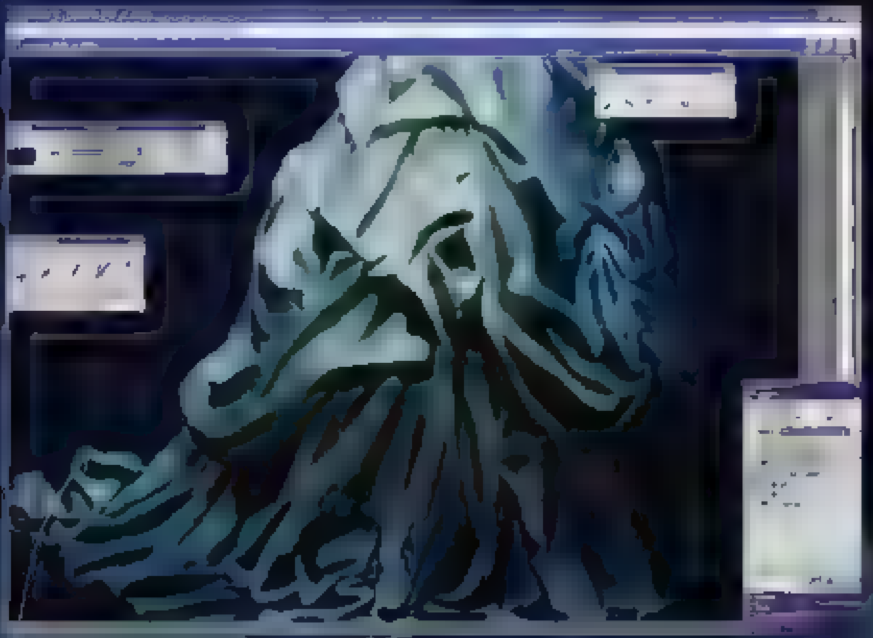


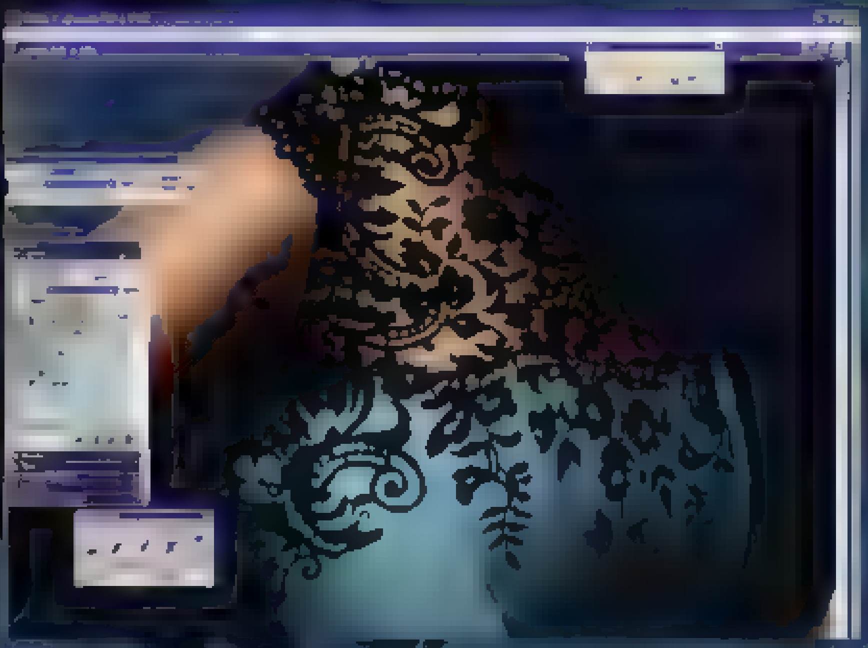
PRO SECRETS

Using tool shortcuts

Using shortcuts can dramatically improve your workflow. If you often switch between tools during painting, it's faster to use keyboard shortcuts – B for Brush, E for Eraser and so on – than it is to choose them from the Tool palette with your mouse.

If you own a Wacom Intuos 3, you'll be given a bunch of function keys on the sides of the tablet. They grant you fast access to any function you specify. With a single click, you will be able to choose a brush, undo your move or enter a specific menu.



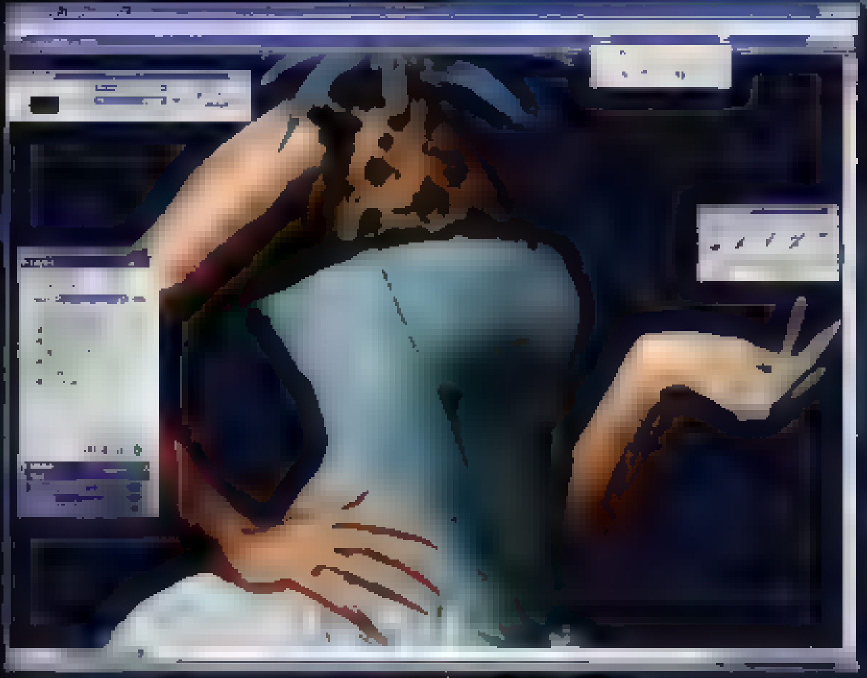


be of medium intensity and a hue similar to the background colour, whereas the shadow below the fold should be darkest.

12 Finish the folds

Create a separate layer for this stage, so that you can erase the changes any time you want. Keep on blending until the colour transitions are smooth, working on highlights and shadows at the same time. Keep in mind the difference between the apparent edges formed by the curve of the material and its real border. The former ones should have a smooth transition from shadows to highlights, while the latter should have a rough edge separating the dark from the light.

The borders of a textile are sewn to prevent the thread ripping, so the edges of the material are thicker than the fabric itself. Make a thin highlighting stroke with an airbrush tool, along those edges.



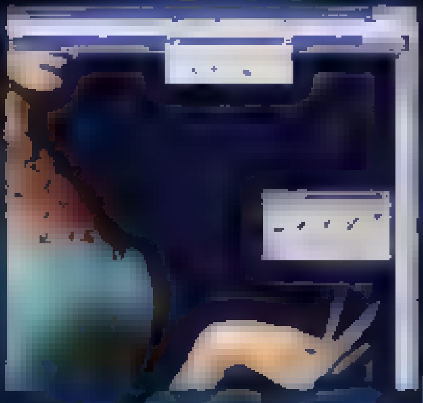
Shortcuts
Colour change
Alt-click (PC)
Option-click (Mac)
This option enables you to change from your current colour to the next colour that you click on.

13 Time for the corset

Let's move our attention to the upper part of the dress. In a new layer, sketch the corset with a Basic Round brush (Painter) or a Hard Round brush (Photoshop). Apply subtle highlights and shadows according to your lighting sketch. Remembering about the various types of shadows I've described, make the corset fade into darkness while making the breasts cast their own shadow.

14 A little lace

If you're dividing the corset into panels, remember that each panel edge should be highlighted and cast a small shadow as well. Using the Basic Round/Hard Round brush, add shadows at both sides of the corset and enrich its colour palette. In Photoshop, you can use the Hard Round shaped Dodge Tool (set to Highlights mode) to add sharp highlights to the material. Remember to keep it subtle. Also, blend the colours with Blender/Spackled Round. Once the corset is looking right, create a new layer on top of it. Choose a small Fine Point brush in Painter or a small Hard Round brush in Photoshop, and sketch out your lace pattern. The design is your choice, but keep it logical, clear and detailed.



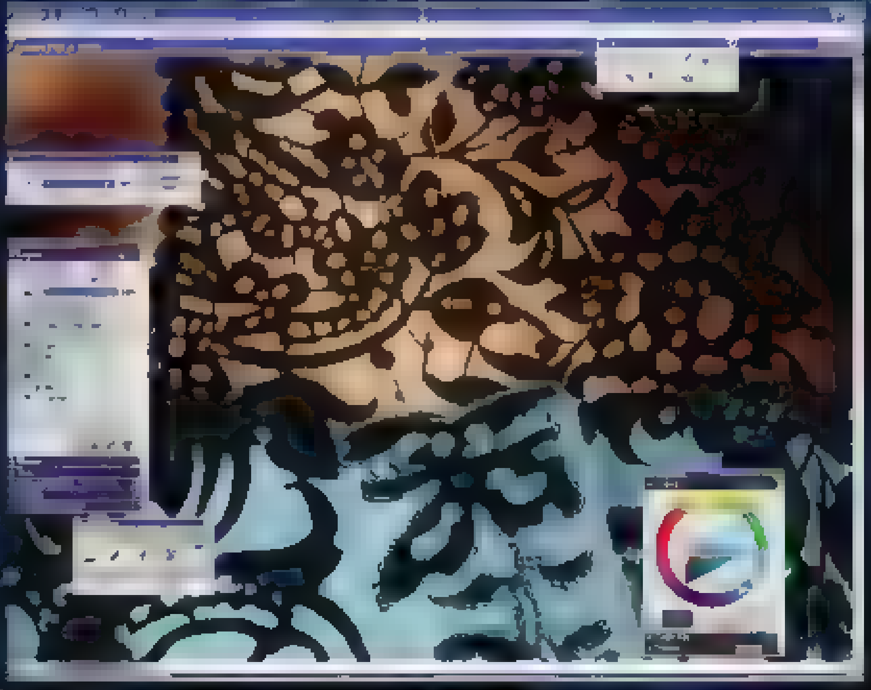
15 Embroidery

Now fill the design with the same colour you made the outlines with. Create a new layer and design the embroidery on the corset the same way as you did for the lace.

16 Thread by thread

The lace looks too dark and bulky, so give it a slight transparency (90 per cent opacity). With the Eraser Tool selected, make some holes of different sizes and shapes in the dark parts.

As for embroidery, you should paint it the way it is sewn: thread by thread. Select a Fine Point/Hard Round tool with a 1-pixel diameter



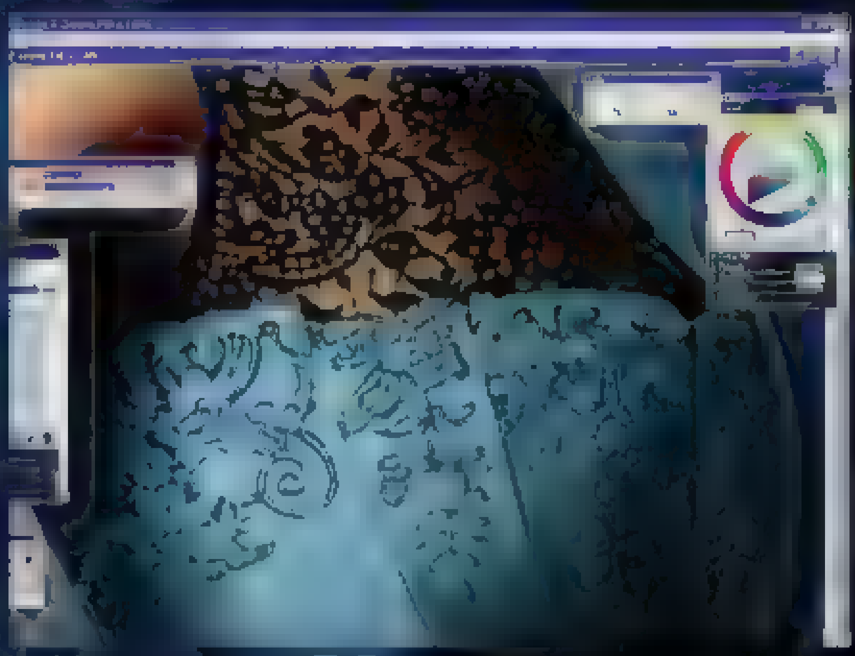
With the brush, make dozens of short lines of similar length, placed next to each other, so they form a kind of outline along the bigger shapes of your design. You might have to zoom in to around 400 per cent of the image size to have a good view of what you're doing.

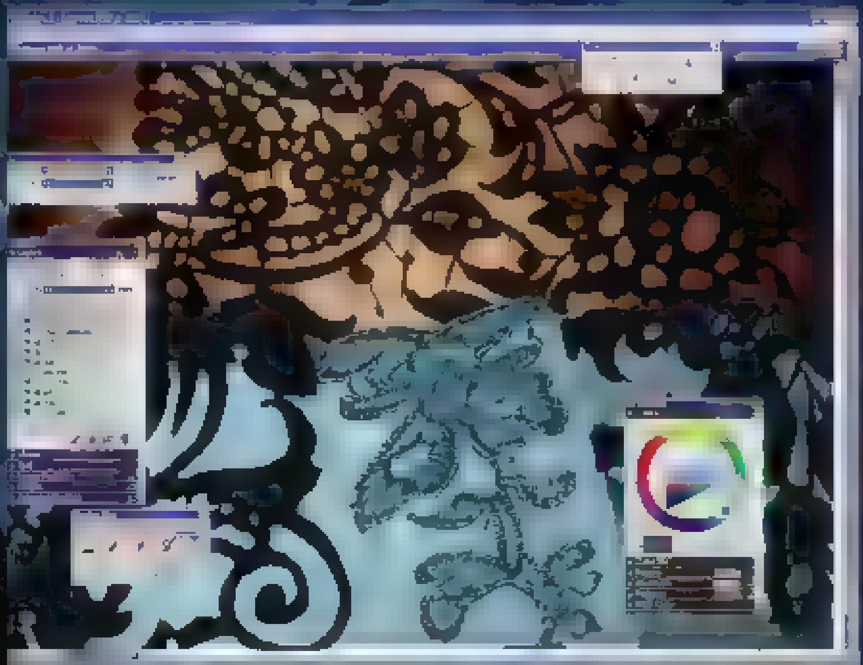
17 A little trickery

As an extra detail, duplicate the lace layer. Leave the original layer untouched, but change the opacity of the copied layer to around 10-20 per cent and move it a bit to one side. This nifty little trick will make your lace design appear fuller, while not affecting its subtlety.

Continue painting in the embroidery. With the same 1-pixel brush, run all over the empty areas between the outline, making a tight zigzag pattern.

To achieve the right effect, it is crucial that you make your lines systematic: they should be somewhat parallel and placed next to each other, without any gaps. Their beginnings and ends cannot overlap the outline you made before. They can also be slightly bent to underline the thickness of the embroidery.

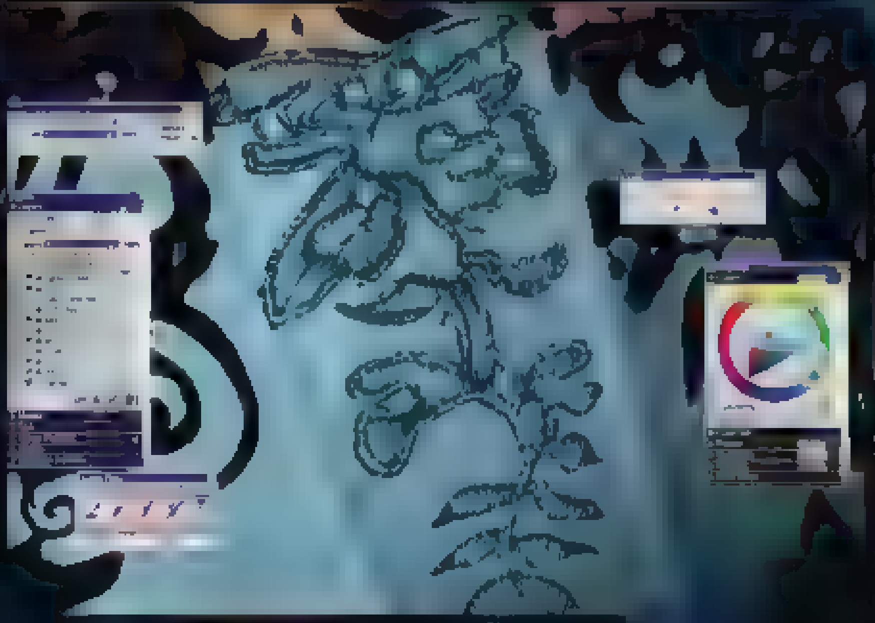




18 Zigzag pattern

Now select a lighter colour from the palette and apply more bits of thread with the same brush, making the same zigzag pattern to fill the embroidery as well as the outline. You can make the highlights a bit stronger at the edges to add some variation.

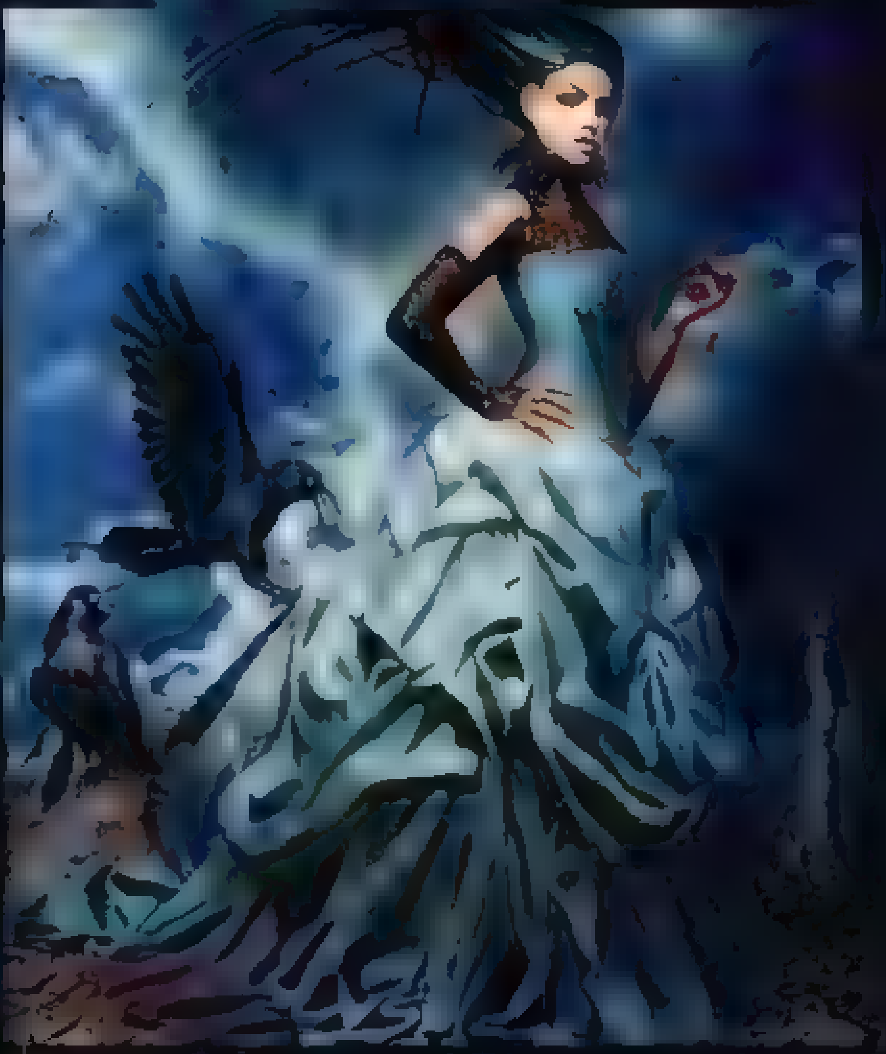
Shortcuts
Free Transform
Ctrl+T (PC)
Command+T (Mac)
This handy little shortcut enables you to quickly change the selected object's size.



19 Bigger brush

To finish the embroidery, enlarge the brush to around 2 pixels and change its opacity to 50 per cent. Apply a light colour on top of the most highlighted areas, especially the edges of the filling embroidery, and a dark shade on the opposite sides.

Lace is often made out of designs set across a tiny net. To finish it off, therefore, create a new layer on top of the present one, then choose a 1-1.5 pixel airbrush in the same colour as the lace, and carefully run it across the whole lace area, making first horizontal, then vertical lines.

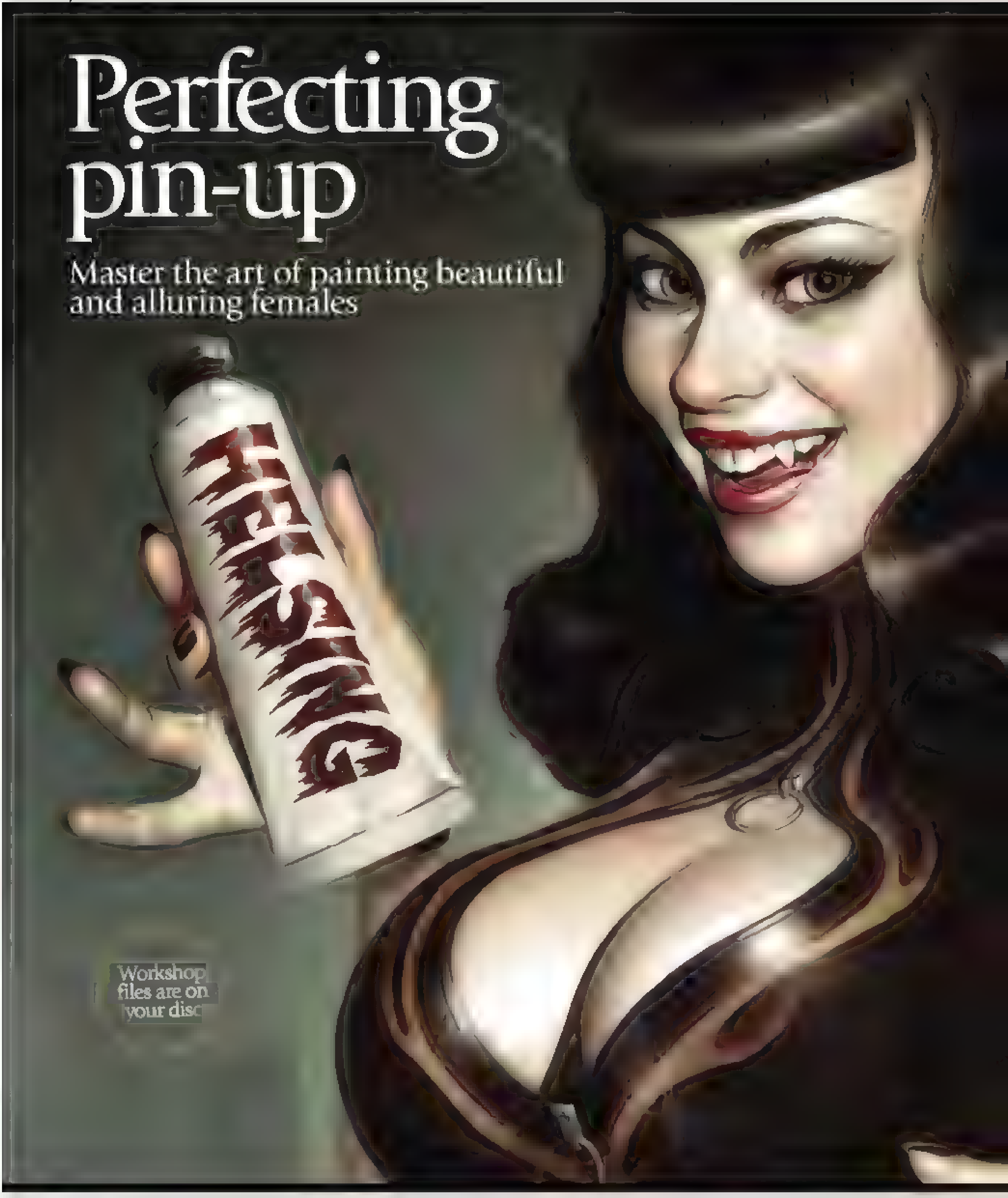


20 Your final image

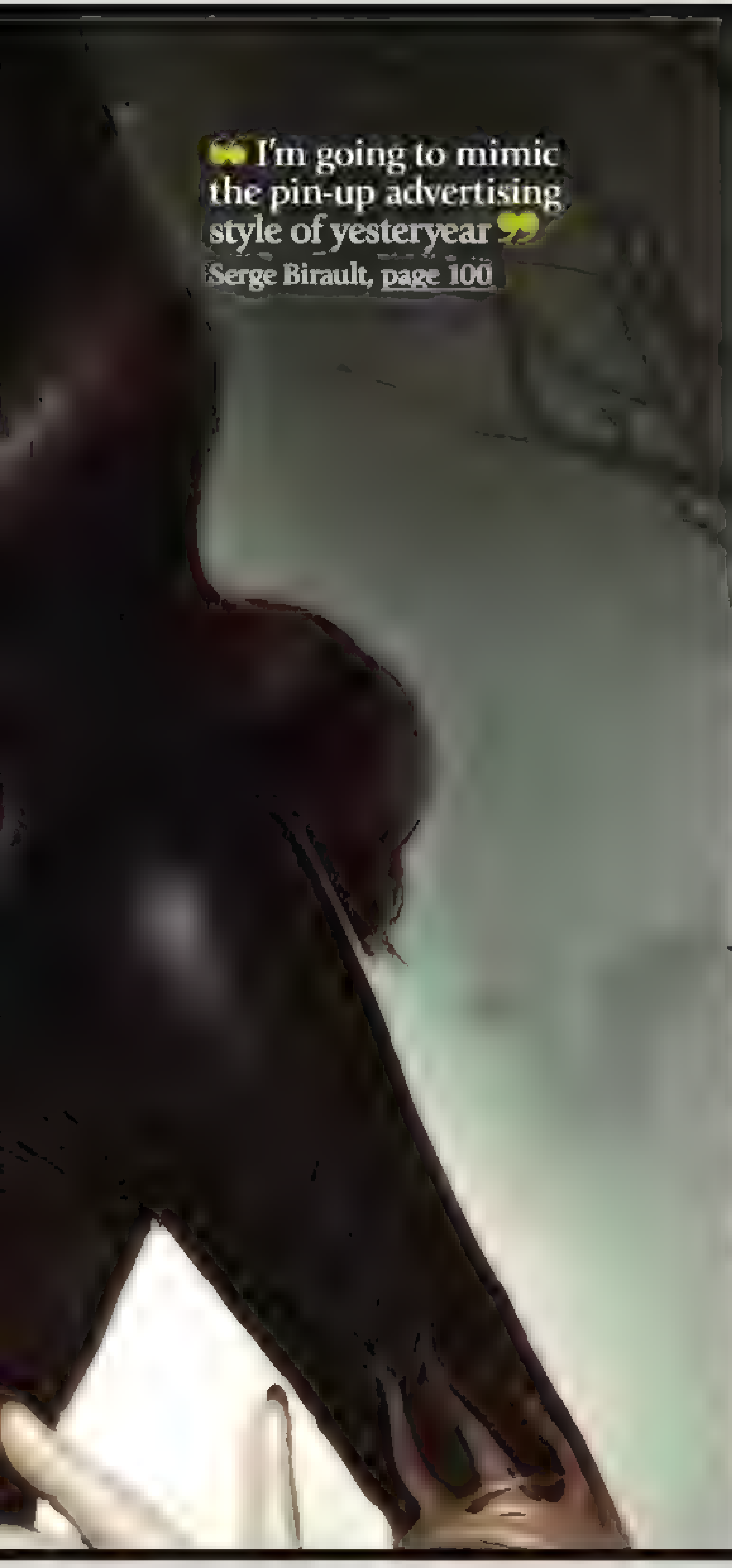
To finish your image, add a suitable background to give your character some context. To enrich the dress design, add some decorative elements that correspond with the dress itself (I've gone for a lace glove) as well as being in sympathy with the background (the feather collar). ●

Perfecting pin-up

Master the art of painting beautiful and alluring females



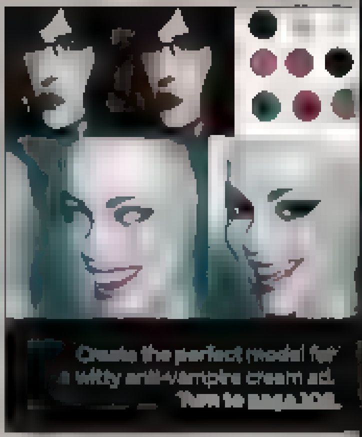
Workshop files are on your disc



> I'm going to mimic the pin-up advertising style of yesteryear
>
> Serge Birault, page 100

Your guide to pin-up style

Heavily influenced by the commercial art of the 1950s and 60s pin-ups, embrace [illegible] to present sexy women in cheeky images that should always appeal but never offend. Recreate classic styles with your own twist.



Create the perfect model for a witty anti-vampire cream ad. Turn to page 100.

Workshops

How to paint perfect pin-ups

Photoshop

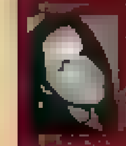
PIN-UP WITH A MODERN TWIST

Pin-up specialist **Cris de Lara** shows us how she uses elements of classic illustration styles in her contemporary images...

Artist **PROFILE**

Cris de Lara

COUNTRY: Canada



Cris is a Brazilian digital artist now living in Canada, with over 14 years of experience working in illustrations and digital painting. She now runs her own company with her partner Alexandre Steckler, painting various pin-ups and children's illustrations.
www.crisdelara.com

On the disc

Find screenshots and the finished file in the Pin-up Fantasy folder inside Pin-up

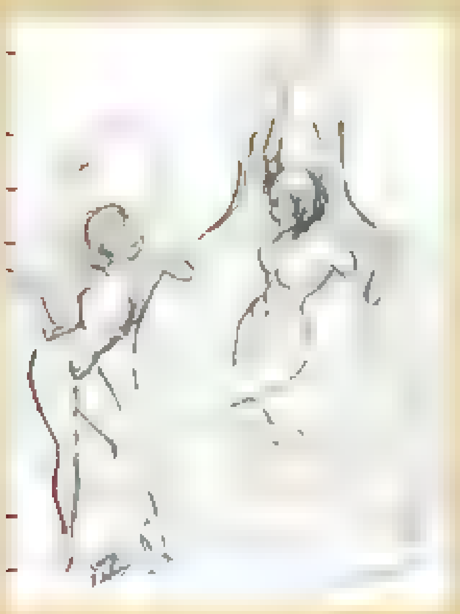
The pin-up is always a pleasant subject to cover, but it can be quite difficult to define its central appeal. However, some general trends can be deduced. A good pin-up is eye-catching and often has a touch of humour elements that offer something more than the simple depiction of beautiful women.

The classic pin-ups of the 40s and 50s had real women performing real actions. Many were stunning paintings in their own right and bore a particular aesthetic appeal. Beautiful women often posed for serious-minded artists, and this served as the basis for many early pin-ups.

Nowadays a pin-up can be any image, with any theme. But is it possible to produce a modern pin-up with an old-fashioned classic look? The answer is yes, and that is what this workshop is about.

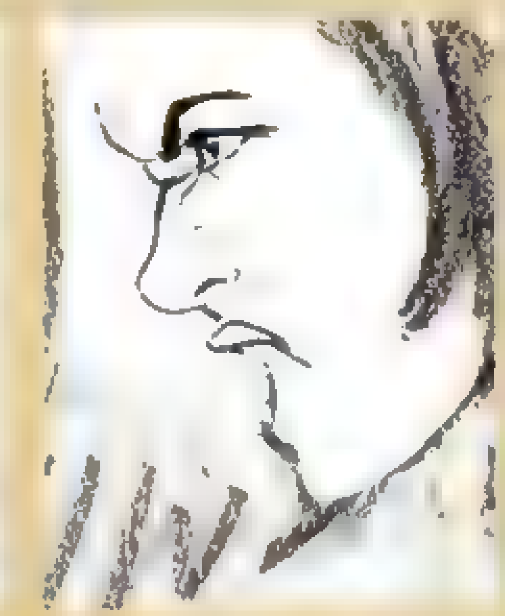
I thought about painting two opposite but appealing female characters: an angel and a demon. They are playing a kind of game, and the demon has tricked the angel into a bottle. The angel is so angry with the demon that she wants to kill her, so she is about to commit a sin. The demon is just standing there calmly with a twinkle in her eye.

I want this modern pin-up to have the feel of a classic work, so I'll explore some examples of beautiful and sexy women, their bodies and facial language, as well as humour in art, the pin-up painting style and colour schemes.



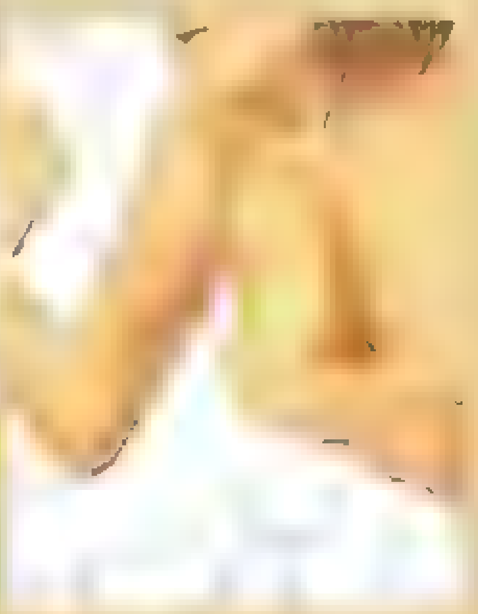
1 Sketch it up

I start by drawing the image in a sketchbook to see how it will fit my general idea. As I don't have models to pose for me, I need to adjust details before anything else. I change the characters' positions to achieve a more dynamic body language. For their respective facial expressions, I use photos of Bettie Page for the demon, and of Wonder Woman actress Lynda Carter for the angel.



2 Face facts

I can't find Lynda Carter's photo with an angry expression, so I pose for it myself. It's a little difficult to create this expression, but I think I end up with a good result. At this point, I realise that it would be better to change some things in the initial sketch. However, instead of drawing by pencil again, I decide to make the needed changes as part of the painting process.



3 Skin tones

One way to make a pin-up look like a classic is through attention to the skin tone. I've chosen a colour palette made up of creamy and pale colours, like peach and orange, as a subtle base for the colouring work. These tones were used by the greatest classic pin-up artists – Gil Elvgren, Norman Rockwell and the like – and help to give the girls a fulsome, glamorous look

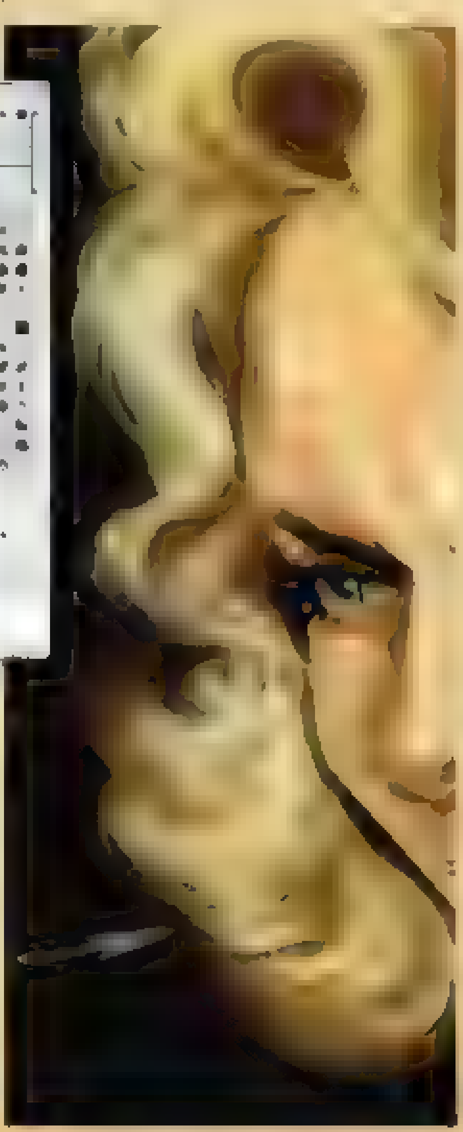
→

4 Light and shade

At this point, I feel that it's time to work with light and shade to make the painting more detailed, and also to define the muscles. I change the angel's expression again, referring once more to my reference shots. Although the skin tone for the angel's body is nice, I decide to paint a short dress for her to make the character more angelic and classic, instead of her wearing only a bikini.

5 Angel hair

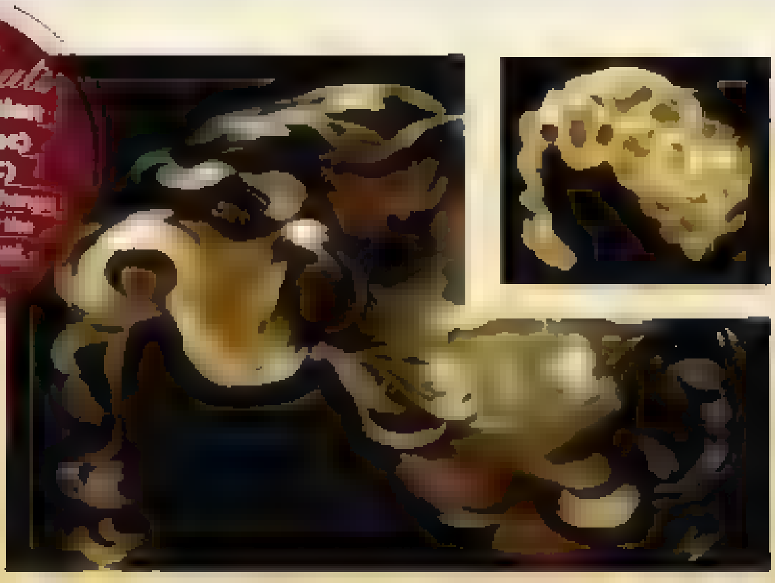
After pondering for some time over whether the angel's hair should be straight or curly, I decide that it should indeed be curly. To get a simulated grainy texture with which to paint the curly hair I use a Round Smooth brush, with the Noise option turned on and Opacity at around 50 per cent. Sometimes I use a bigger diameter brush, sometimes I use a smaller one. I also paint in extra strands of hair to help stress its brightness.



6 Refining the hair

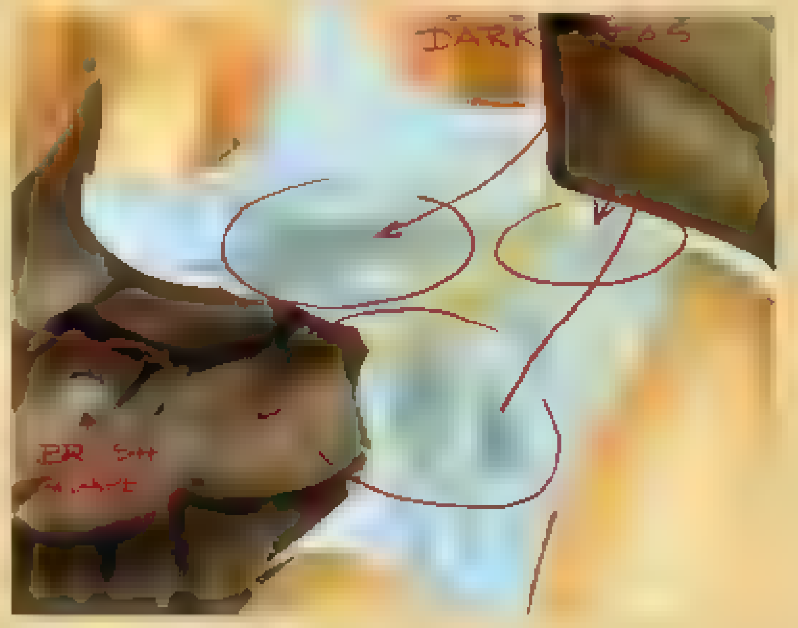
I use brushes of varying shape hardness and opacity to create the curly strands, in order to achieve the most natural look possible.

Shortcuts
Hue Saturation
Cmd+U (Mac)
Ctrl+U (PC)
A practical tool to change the colour hue for the whole image or just part of it.



7 Adding angelic curls

I enhance the hair's curly streams in a new layer by using a Round brush with low Opacity, around 60 per cent perhaps, and a slightly harder, noiseless option on some of the other strands. This new layer, with the enhanced hair, is then placed over the original hair layer.



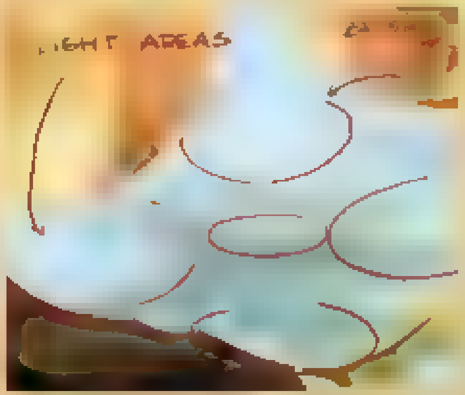
8 Clothing an angel

Classic pin-up women very often wear clothes that boost their bodies and also increase their charm. For the angel, I decide to create a simple short dress, although I think about adding some wrinkles to give the idea of a light garment. With a Large Hard brush at around 60 per cent Opacity, and a darker blue tone than the basic tone I used for the dress, I mark and work in some areas to make the wrinkles.

PRO SECRETS

Reference the old to create the new

The balance between the modern and the classic is complex to achieve. I'd recommend you look for classic old pin-up images for reference. By comparing your work to these samples, you'll better understand the concepts that can be used in modern images to achieve the balance. Try to keep the essence of the classic, but add modern energy.

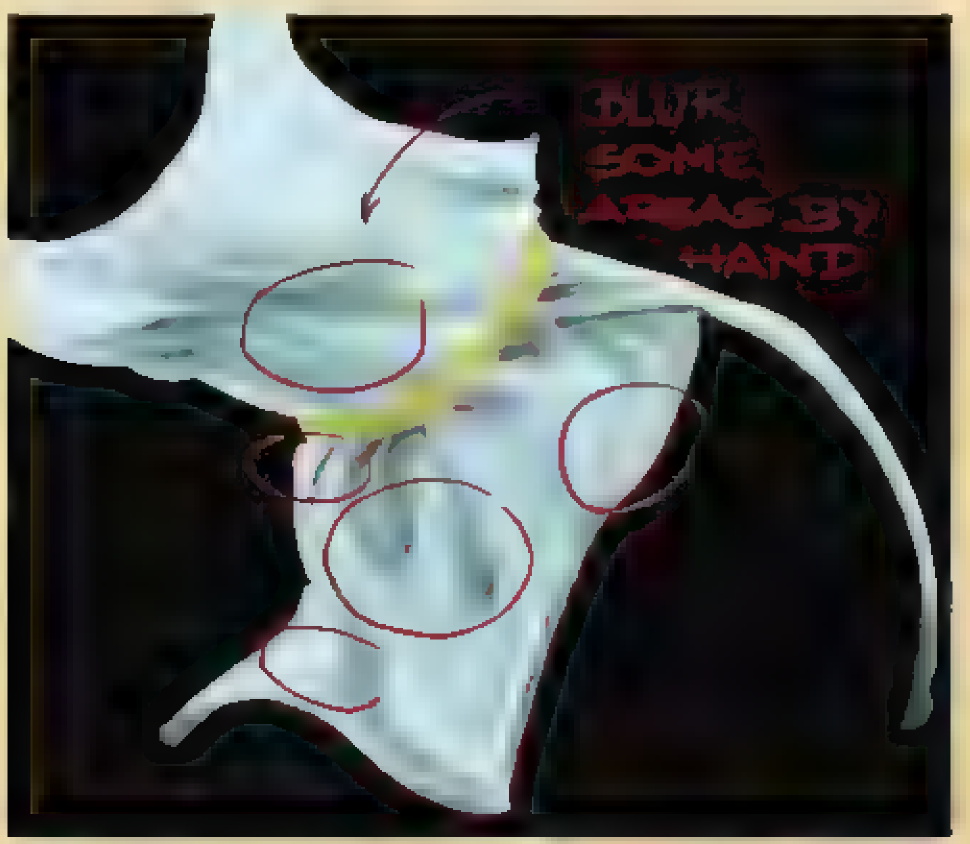


9 Touching up

I apply the same process to the lighter areas, simulating the light's incidence but changing the brush's diameter and opacity. Try to minimise the variations between light and dark tones by smoothing them at the edges.

10 Folds and wrinkles

After making some varied wrinkles on the clothes with a Hard brush and feeling more confident about it as I progress, I check the results by zooming in and out to see if it all looks okay. When you think it's looking about right, use the Blur Tool to manually add a fade to the edges of the lighter and darker areas in order to achieve a more natural look for the wrinkles.



13 Feathering

I return to the angel's wings at this point. I make a selected area with a feather shape and apply the flat colour in the tone I feel it needs. Next, I apply a Gaussian Blur filter, set to around 2 pixels, to the feather to achieve the smoother effect at the edge. Then, using the Eraser Tool, I delete some parts of the feather, making fast, irregular movements to create a more natural result.

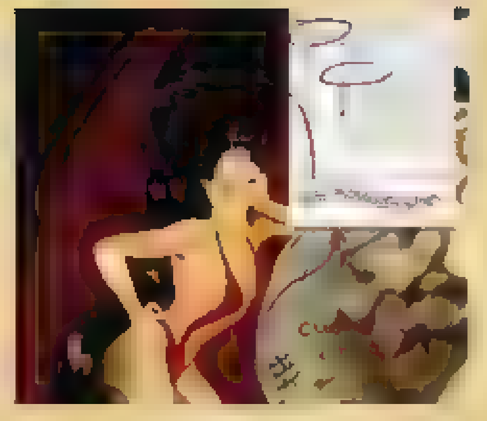
PRO SECRETS

Make her feminine

It's important to show girls in a modern pin-up with energy, interaction in the image while enhancing their beauty with an attractive pose. Pay attention to the face, eyes, hair, body shape, skin tone, hands and feet. Consider accessories, including the clothes, make-up, hairstyle and jewellery, to take the image to a higher level.

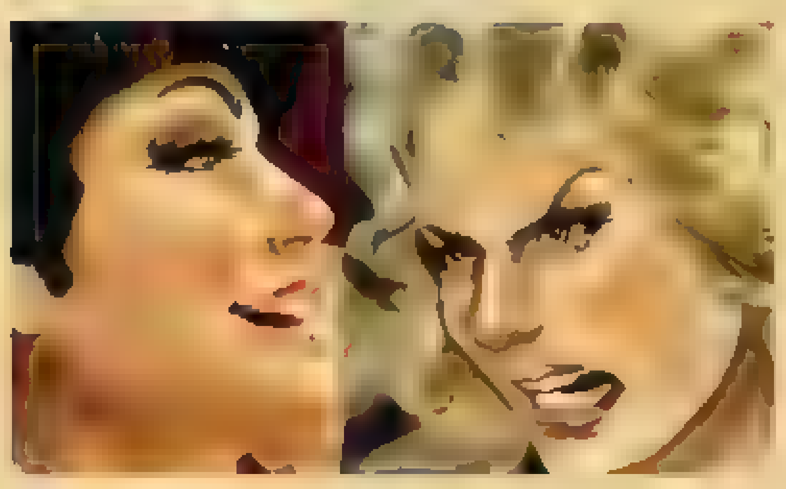
11 Starting the demon

I want my demon to have the classic Bettie Page look. She is a pin-up legend and I love her, so I decide to make our demon as charmingly spicy as Bettie used to be. For now, I focus on parts of the demon other than her face. For the wing texture, I use a customised brush with the Angle Jitter option set to 100% (find it at Brush Palette>Shape Dynamic>Angle Jitter). This makes my job easier and faster.



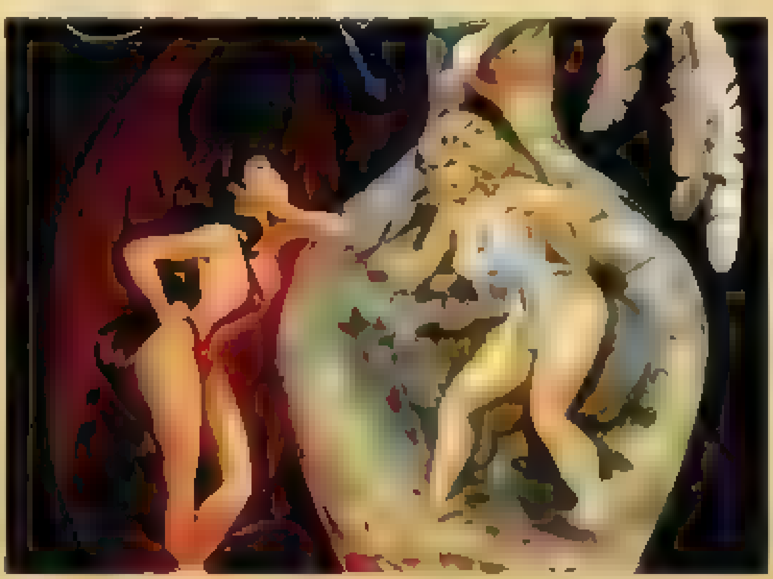
12 Demon wings

I use the Dodge Tool with the Highlight option selected to enhance the details on the wing's surface. I paint those details in an irregular way to get a more natural result. Similar effects can be created with the Burn Tool, using some shadowing to enhance the area painted. Be careful and take your time when using these tools, you can easily end up with an artificial result.



14 Expressing emotions

The face is the most important part of the image – not only because it is eye-catching, but also because the audience will compare it to a real face and will look at it critically. I said I had decided to make a modern pin-up in the classic style. By this I meant that the characters' expressions are very different to those of the classic pin-up girls. While the classic girls always have a soft or surprisingly cute expression, I want to show an intensity of feeling in this image.



15 Some final details

To finish with, I think about adding a little smoke around each character, as a kind of detail of each other's energy. The demon's red smoke envelopes the bottle and seals it with the cork, while the angel's energy is weak and locked inside the bottle. I created the smoke effect by using a Soft Round brush with 80 per cent Opacity for its shape. After my initial marks, I decrease the brush diameter and add some random marks in the smoke for a more spontaneous look. ●

Photoshop

WINGS OF DESIRE

Aly Fell takes you though his personal process of creating an enticing pin-up character with a fantasy theme.

Artist **PROFILE**

Aly Fell

COUNTRY: UK

Aly's worked [illegible]

Previously he was a 2D [illegible] artist primarily working for [illegible]

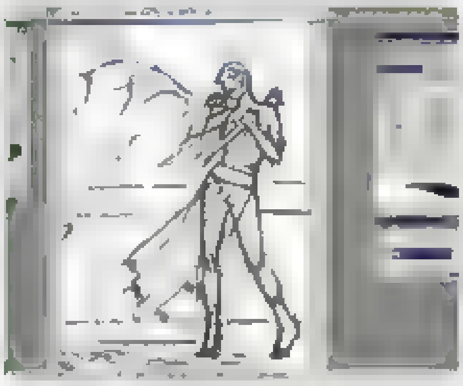
On the disc

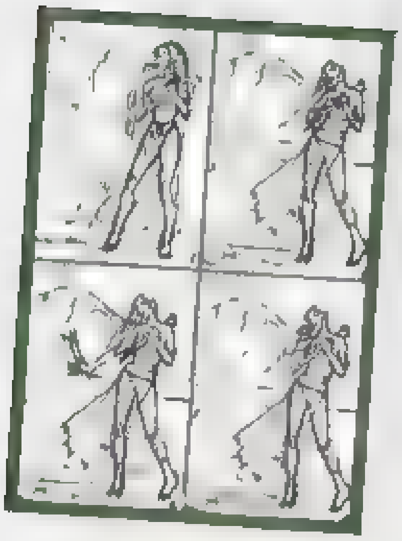
Find screenshots and workshop files in Wings Of Desire inside the Pin-up folder.

Character creation is something you can't take for granted. This workshop will show my personal process of character creation, which I hope will give you a basic understanding of the technical and creative methods required to use Photoshop for painting a finished character portrait.

To produce a character with personality and empathy, even when it's a purely fantasy-based girl, it's important to provide them with some depth and expression. If in doubt, a smile works wonders, and will immediately bond the viewer with the image. However, a convincing smile can be one of the hardest expressions to get right in a painting.

Have a strong idea of what you want to draw before you start, otherwise the 'blank canvas' can be a pretty scary thing. Decide what your character is going to be doing, what their personality is like, and how you'd like to present this through expression, clothing, posture and so on. Start with a few doodles or thumbnails, and pick one that you feel is the strongest. For this character I was given a rough brief of a female pin-up character with a strong fantasy element. Based on that, I developed a small story from which this image could become a scene to present the character. She is Astarte, a fallen angel with the desire to be mortal – and the intention to fulfil that desire in a dramatic, brutal way.





1 Rough sketches

I start with a blank canvas. For my line doodles, I tend to work on white, but I turn this to a colour later – usually when I apply body colour for the first time. Resolution is quite low at this stage – A4 at 72dpi – as this is a happier resolution for me to sketch at. You can upsize later.

I have an idea of what I want the composition to be like, and sketch out four roughs. Each has slight differences, but I settle on one that feels slightly stronger pose-wise. Here, she's looking at the viewer; something pretty essential in a pin-up, as it pulls the viewer in. At this stage, the background is vague: I want something a bit classical, but slightly decaying as well.

Shortcut
Liquify Tool
Shift+Ctrl+X (PC)
Shift+Cmd+X (Mac)
Use this handy shortcut to access the Liquify Tool and blend elements of your drawing.

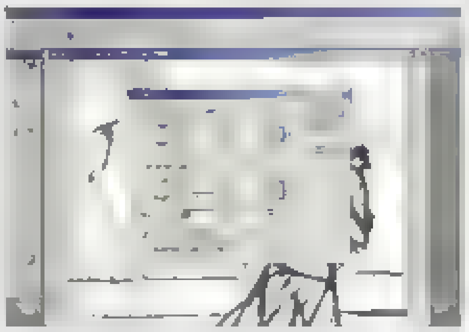
2 Increase resolution

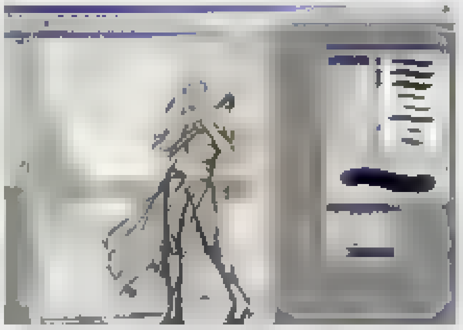
Once you decide to start adding colour, you have the option of upsizing to the final resolution or continuing at the lower option until you start adding more detail. I decide to bring the resolution up, selecting Image>Image Size. With Constrain Proportions and Resample Image both ticked, I change the resolution to 300dpi.

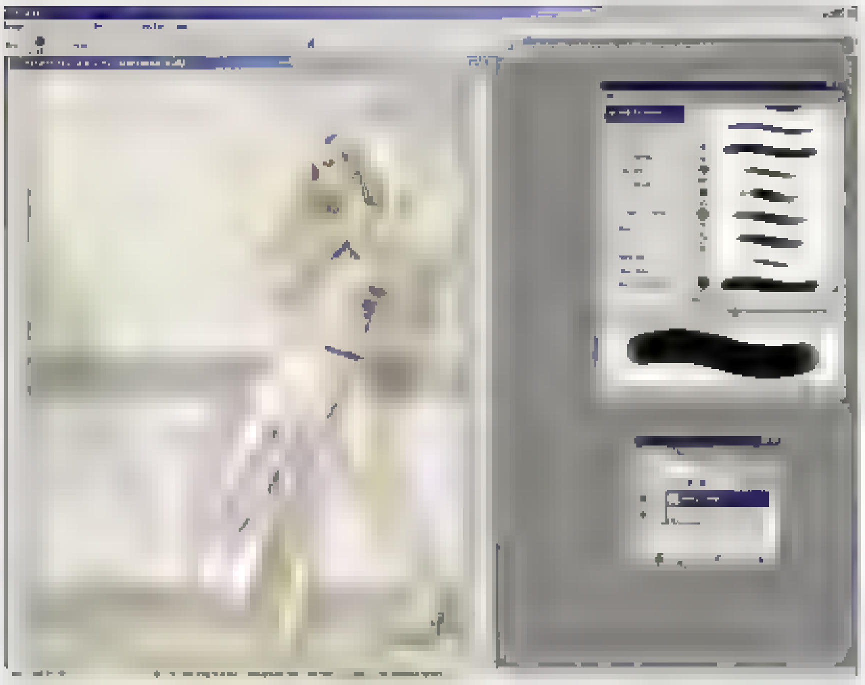
I create a new layer and fill it with a mid-grey. I set the layer blending option to Multiply so I'm able to see my line work through it. The use of layers is a constant debate. The options in Photoshop are fantastic, so use them to their full advantage. However, I'll be keeping layers to a minimum here: the computer will run much smoother when working with bigger, more memory-intensive brushes. I'll use a couple of adjustment layers later to play with saturation and colour as the image nears completion.

3 Facial expression

I decide where I want the light to come from and what kind of light source I want (daylight, for example) and start blocking in colour on a new layer. I nearly always start with the face, as that is the fun bit for me! I want her to look quite cynical, with the hint of a smile, but this could change as the picture develops. I sketch in the details of the expression and lighting, not worrying too much about getting it finished to any degree yet – that comes later. At this point, I decide that the line work is too heavy, so I reduce its Opacity to make it greyer, and merge the line and greyscale layers ▸▸







4 Skin tones

I work outwards from the face, blocking in as I go. I try to get as much of the under colour and line covered up as possible, not worrying about working into it yet. Skintones depend on what light is ambient to the character. Skin tends to reflect whatever colour is around it – from clothing and the environment, for example.

5 Colour blending

I avoid using soft-edged brushes during the initial stages: they can give a smooth, unrealistic feel with little texture. Instead, I use a hard-edged brush, maybe with a Dual Brush option to give some texture. Have a little experiment with these.

Blend tonal areas by working into them. Colour pick between the two extremes of tone you're blending and, with a mid-opacity setting on the brush, cross the two with your stroke. Colour-pick the blended two, and further cross the blends. Continue to colour-pick and blend until there's a smoothness that doesn't look airbrushy.

6 Flatten and save

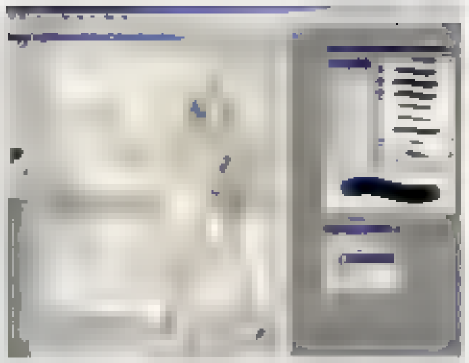
Once you've got your base colour down, giving you an idea of the final feel of the picture, flatten the image to keep the file size down. (Remember: you can adjust levels and colour balance later if you wish.) I flatten after I've made changes on a new layer. And I save regularly, sometimes with a new file, and can end up with many versions that I can later delete. I can't emphasise the importance of regular saving enough. It's not likely, but programs do freeze, and there is nothing worse than doing something you're really happy with, only for that work to disappear into digital oblivion.

Shortcuts
Copy Merged
Shift+Ctrl+C (PC)
Shift+Cmd+C (Mac)
[illegible]

PRO SECRETS

Liquified expressions

Try the Liquify Tool [illegible]



7 White wings

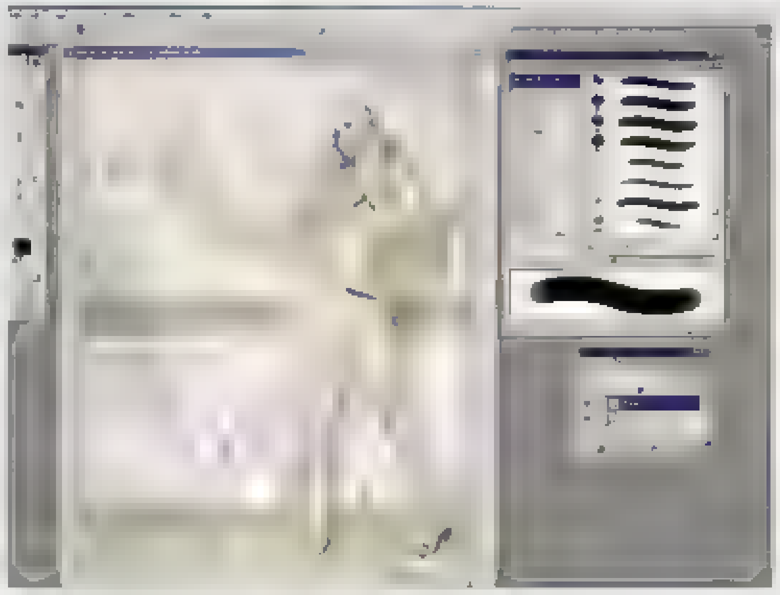
I now approach the wings on a new layer. I intend to keep the painting of the wings quite loose, with minimal detail, and make them white.

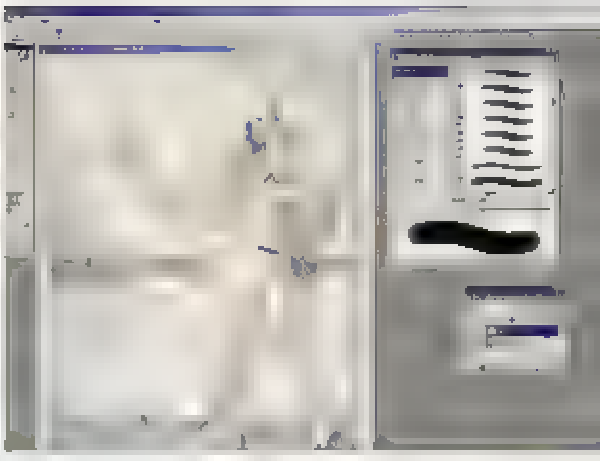
White is rarely 'white', of course. As with skintones, it depends on the light and environment. As the most reflective of tones, white can also be the most variable. It reflects back whatever colour light is shining on it, or whatever colour lies next to it. I'm using a lot of white in this image, but this will be worked into with various hues and tones to give the required feel.

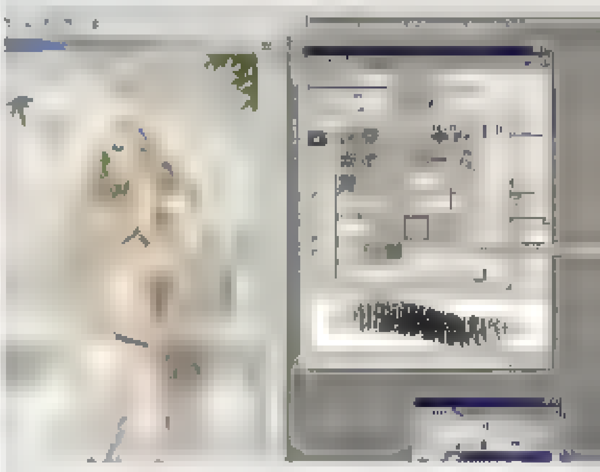
I look at some pictures of swan wings to get a general idea of the pattern of wing feathers, then adapt the pattern to my needs. Don't be afraid to use reference if you don't know what something looks like: it's better than getting it wrong. But there is a difference between referencing something and copying it... My big reference is hands, and I nearly always use my own – not always a good idea as a guy!

8 Brush texture

Now I start working into some of the background details. I quite fancy a wall that has some element of cracked plasterwork, so I use two brushes with textures on them. The first is a Conte Pencil brush, which is a standard Photoshop brush and can be found in the Dry Media brushes. I use it with Shape Dynamics switched on. The other is a Hard Round brush with Other Dynamics enabled and the Wax Crayon on Charcoal Paper texture in the Artist Surfaces textures. I also darken the floor tiles a bit.



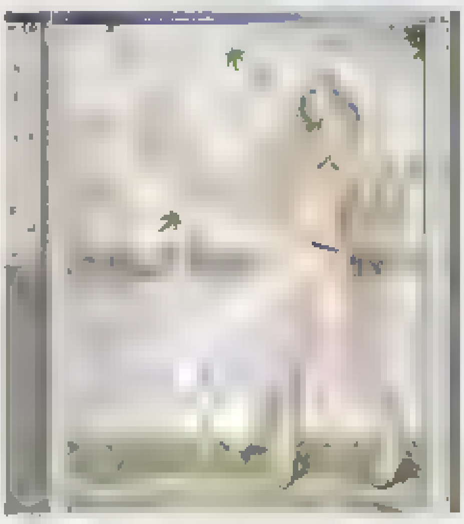


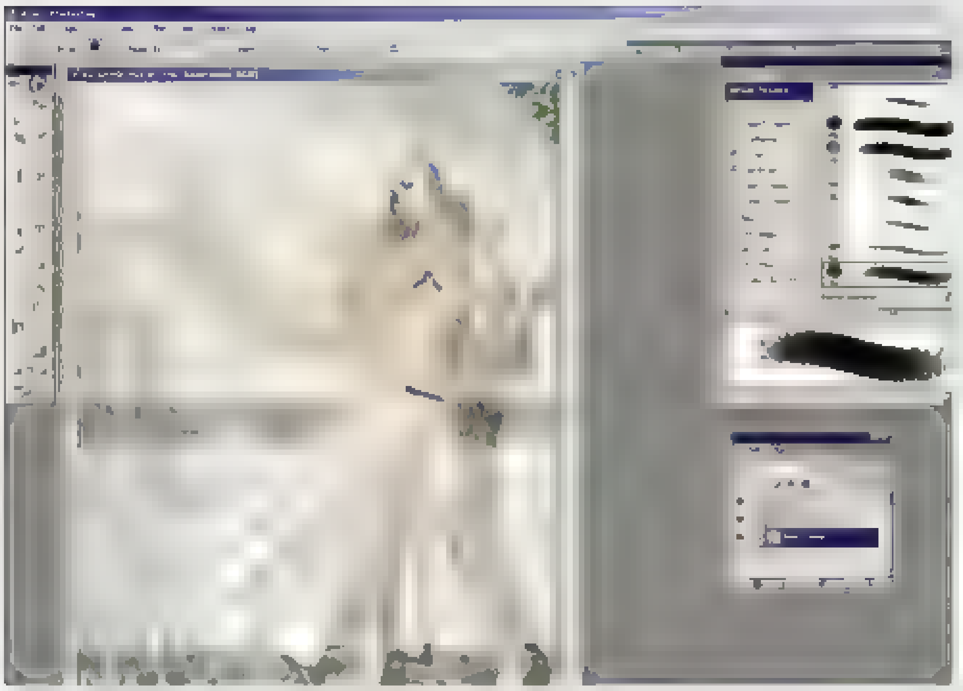


9 Out of the shadows

The shadows on the wall behind my character hint at plants growing out of shot, so I start with a brush on low Opacity, building up the depth with multiple brushstrokes. Shadows are full of colour and can have many subtle blues, purples and greens in sunlight, but also they depend upon the colour of the object the shadow belongs to and how close it is to the surface that the shadow's on.

I experiment with some loose leaves floating through the shot, along with the feathers I always intended to be there. As yet, I'm still undecided over whether they'll stay, or whether the composition actually needs them.





10 Layer Blend

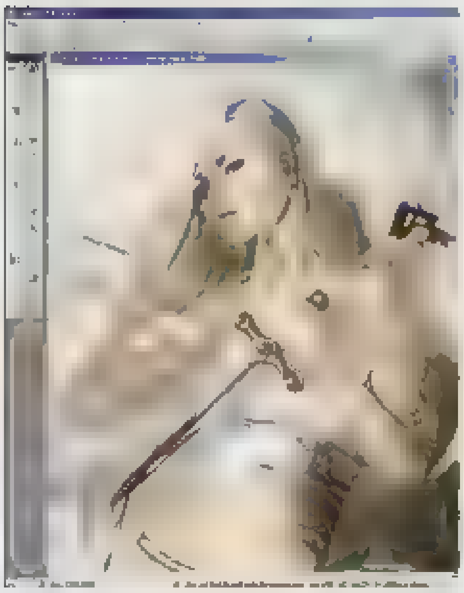
The overall ambience of the picture is feeling a bit light, so I copy all of the image (Shift+Ctrl+C) and paste it into a new layer on the top. I set the new layer to Multiply and reduce the Opacity right down to about 15 per cent. This just takes the levels down a bit. I then flatten it and continue working on the background.

I decide that I don't like the leaves after all, and get rid of them. From here on, I've mainly got detailing left to do.

11 Softening and highlights

I start with the face. I think the expression needs tightening up and that the lips and flesh need more highlights. I also decide to soften the hair. I've mainly used the hard-edged brushes for this workshop, but I use soft brushes for final flesh tones and blending, to get a smoother transition. Using them over blends you made with the harder-edged brushes somehow gives more depth, like overpainting with traditional media.

The gold detailing, such as the dagger and the brooch on her chest, is next. For highlighting, I use a hard-edged brush with Shape Dynamics on and Other Dynamic off. This is also useful for adding highlights to blood.



12 Final details

The wings stay quite loose, and I only pick out a bit of detail in them. Most of the attention at this final detail stage is on Astarte and her outfit.

The skirt proves to be quite tricky. I experiment a bit with the transparency of the chiffon-like material, but I also want it to be quite heavy, so I end up compromising and have it thinner at the top, with heavier folds toward the base.

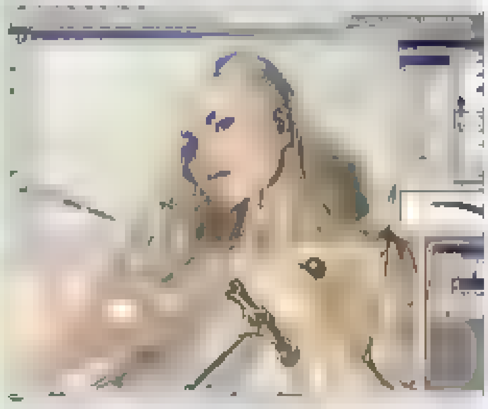
13 Evaluating the composition

At this stage, I realise how unhappy I am with the right arm pushing the hair from her face, so it's time for a redraw. I usually have a mirror next to the computer: using yourself or a friend for reference is very important if you doubt a position or pose. If it's the wrong hand you can always flip the picture, which is something you should be doing on a regular basis anyway. The new hand is more like the one from the original rough.

PRO SECRETS

Flip to eliminate [illegible]

[illegible] will help identify.

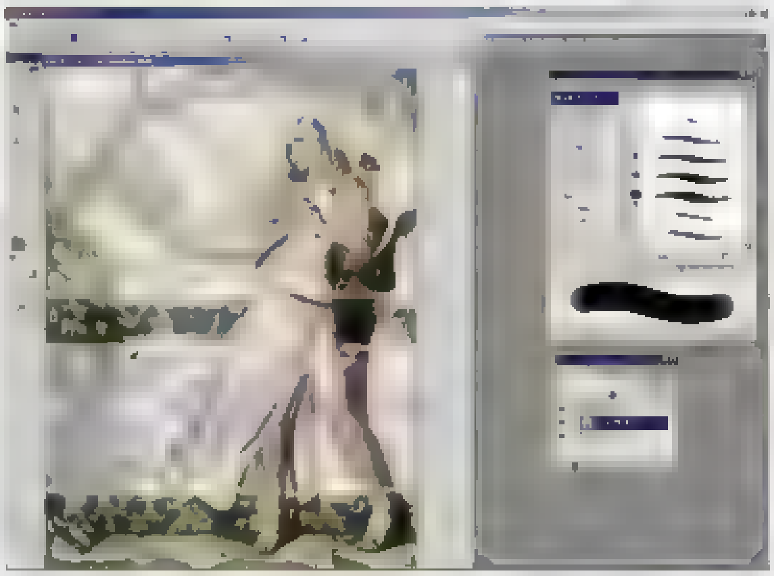


14 Tweaking the face

Almost there! There's not much else to do now, except continuing to tightening up the detail. The face is next: this is where I use the Liquify Tool to give a subtle tweak to things like the jaw line. I decide to make her eyes silver, which gives her a kind of distant, lost look. I incorporate a shadow across the top left of the picture to balance the composition a little.

15 Final adjustments and flattening

I flatten the final layers, then make a duplicate layer of the image. I do my adjustments on this layer and erase as I need, revealing the original underneath. I turn the new layer into a Multiply layer and adjust the Opacity down to about 15 per cent, then erase the bits I want to be lighter. My final adjustment to the image is a new layer filled with a light blue, with Opacity set to 20 per cent and the blending mode set to Colour Burn. A final flatten, and it's done! ●



The lady is

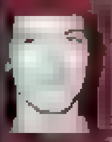
THE LADY IS A VAMP

Serge Birault [illegible]

Artist PROFILE

Serge Birault

COUNTRY: France



Serge is a freelance illustrator and has worked for the mobile phone industry and several web design agencies. He's well versed in ActionScript development, 3D modelling and animation software.

www.[illegible].com

On the disc

Find screenshots and Serge's image in Work Sans Pin-Up, Magic Inside Pin-up

A dvertising used to be so simple: take a pretty, scantily dressed [illegible] off the product. Throw [illegible] slightly uncomfortable smile, and job done! Of course, today's [illegible] fun and innocent charm [illegible]

usually there's no need to place so much emphasis on the model, but I'm guessing you'd rather see more of the girl than a close-up of anti-vampire cream!

I'll happily admit to being influenced by three artists: Elvgren, Sorayama and Ingres. Gil Elvgren is the pin-up artist for me. His girls are always found in strange situations that are usually just an excuse to show off their garter belts. (This piece of lingerie is a must for classic pin-ups!) And I'm a disciple of Hajime Sorayama: he's my technical master. I learned everything that I know about using an airbrush from him. I spent my early years with my old airbrush, acrylic tubes and collection of coloured pencils, trying to emulate his style.

Finally, I must mention my favourite painter, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. I love the physical distortions that he created. Realistic rendering for a non-realistic subject is something that I aim for in all my work.

1 Basic considerations

[illegible] large picture – at least A3 format and 300dpi. It's more comfortable working at this resolution, and enables me to achieve the same level of detail across the whole image.

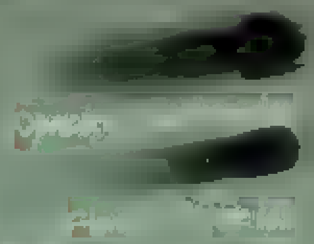
Don't hesitate to generate a lot of Photoshop layers along the way. There were over 2,000 for this particular composition. You'll need to merge them regularly, [illegible], even if you have a powerful computer.

I find it helpful to keep the Photoshop interface clean, with only the Layers palette and the toolbar being permanently on show. I'm a bit of a perfectionist, and need between 20 and 50 hours to finish a picture. [illegible]

[illegible] I find that it comes in handy when [illegible]

2 Composition

There are no sure-fire rules for coming up with a good composition. Just try to imagine how a viewer takes in an image, breaking it down into core areas. Bear in mind that you're creating pin-up art, so the only important element is the pin-up herself.



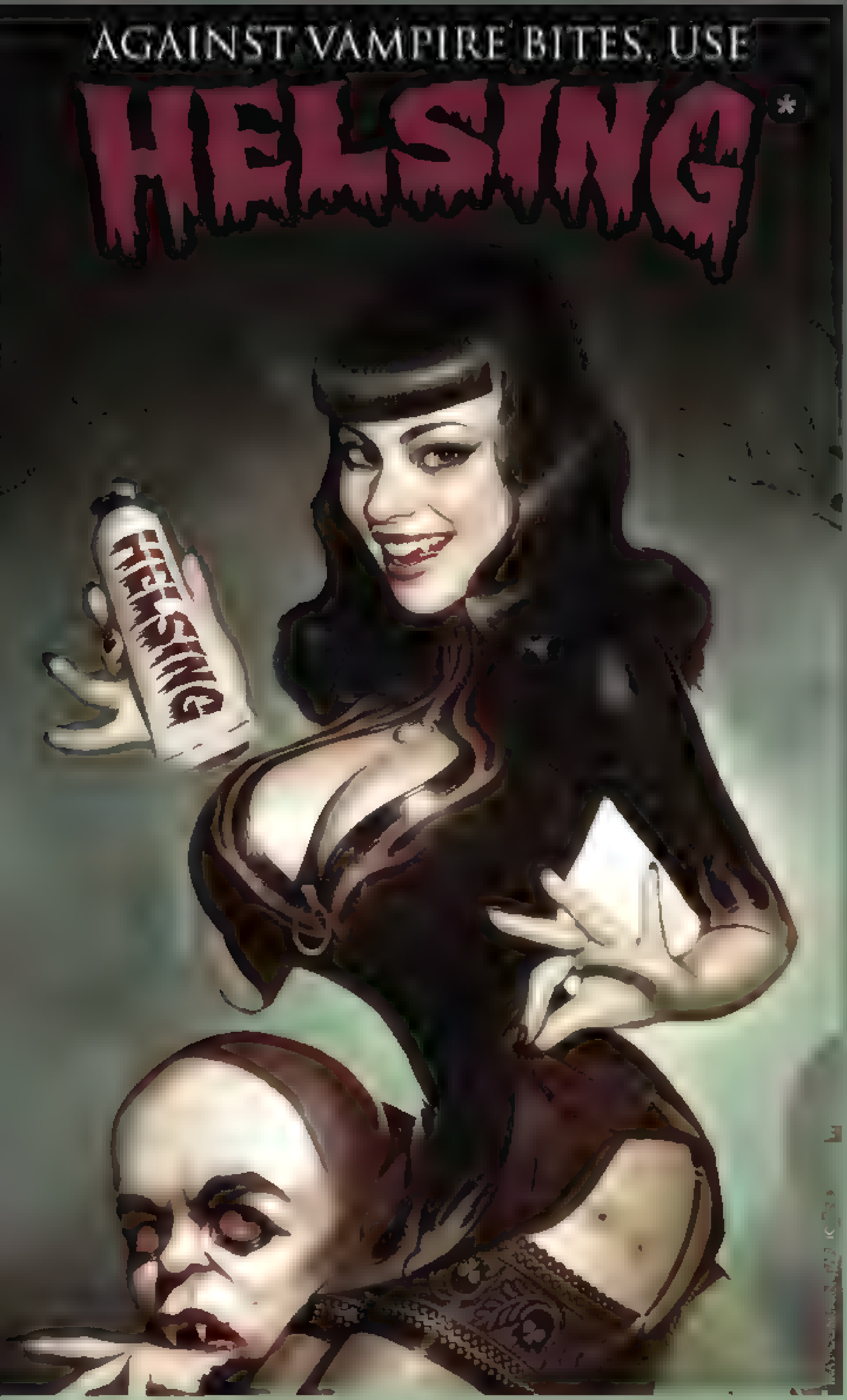
3 Brush choice

[illegible] custom brushes [illegible]. My three standard brushes – Hard Round, Soft Round and [illegible] getting the job done. [illegible]

PRO SECRETS

Be the boss

[illegible] your software. No matter how powerful it is, [illegible] Photoshop are only tools that you use to express your creativity. You can become an expert artist without resorting to using complex filters or manipulations.

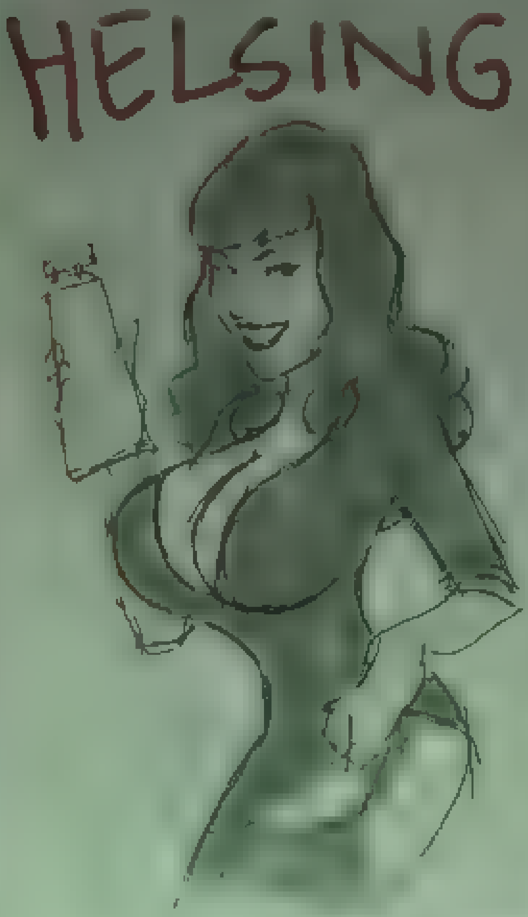


4 Airbrushing

The Airbrush is the most important tool for me. I reduce Opacity to below 40 per cent; when I'm using very dark colours, it's set at less than 5 per cent. Furthermore, I create a new layer for pretty much every airbrush stroke I make. Sometimes I decrease the opacity of the layer itself. It's very useful, if somewhat labour-intensive. You have to keep your base coat visible because you'll end up with overly smooth results if your airbrush strokes are too visible. Sorayama follows the same method using acry you can see the pencil sketch behind the airbrush coat. For more information on traditional airbrush techniques, take a look at Hubert de Lartigue's website (www.hubertdelartigue.com) – there's plenty of interesting stuff here.

5 Sketching

I don't spend a lot of time on my initial sketch of the pin-up. The only part that ends up being really detailed is her face. The entire sketch is done on a single [illegible] discarding the background.

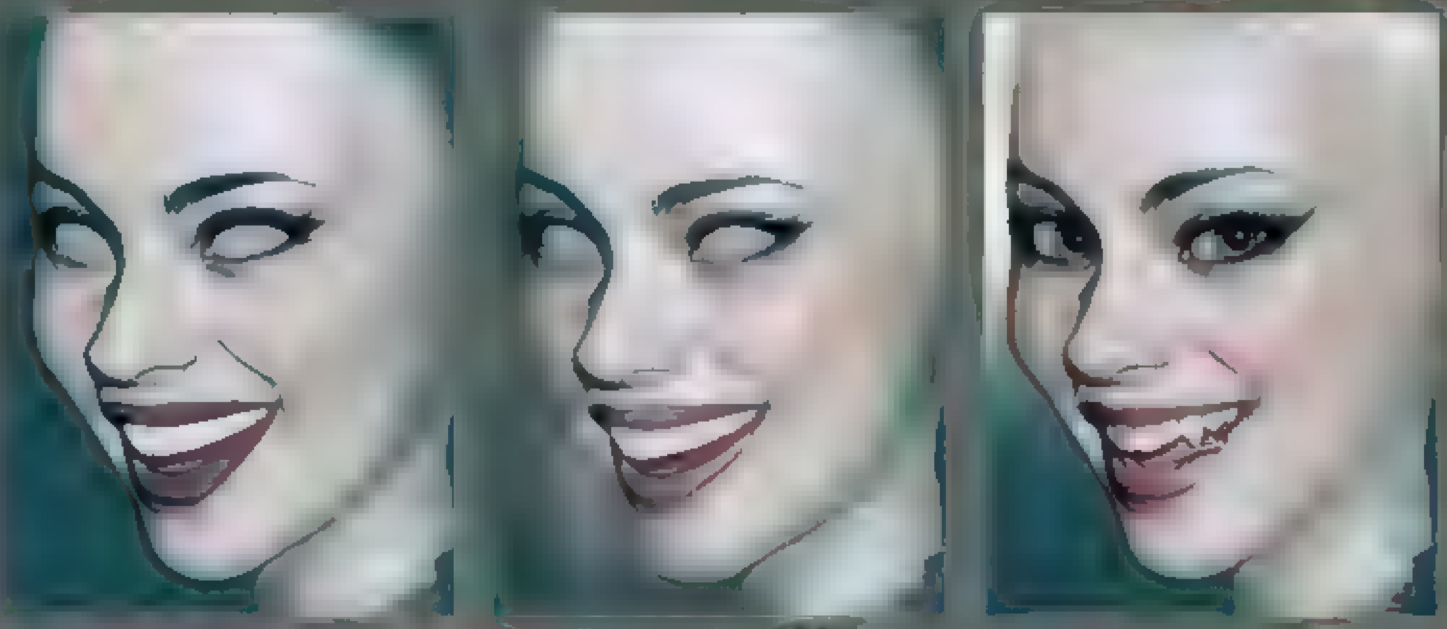


6 Colours

I start with a cyan/turquoise background – it's easier to work with these cold colours. To achieve a realistic rendering, avoid pure black or pure white. I refer to William Bouguereau [illegible] La Vague for cold skin tones [illegible] gradients that are too linear, and for best results, always use more than two colours.

7 Light source

I want a single light source in my image, but it has to be a strong one, like a photographic flash. In this case, shadows have to be tiny but deep, while reflections have to be bright. Realistic skin tones benefit from high contrast. I'll add a retro-looking light effect later, perhaps behind the head.

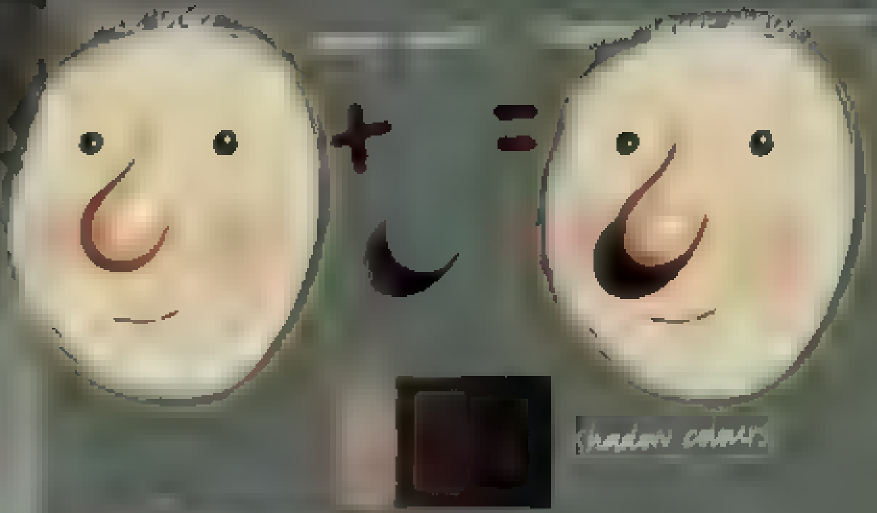


8 Facial skin tones

The face is a crucial part of my pictures, and I always spend a long time working on it. First, I track down some reference sources, such as paintings or photos. Here I make use of my friend Suzanne's face, which features in *Welcome to Hell*, one of my old artworks. After some minor colour, saturation and contrast changes (Image>Adjust), I've got my flesh tones.

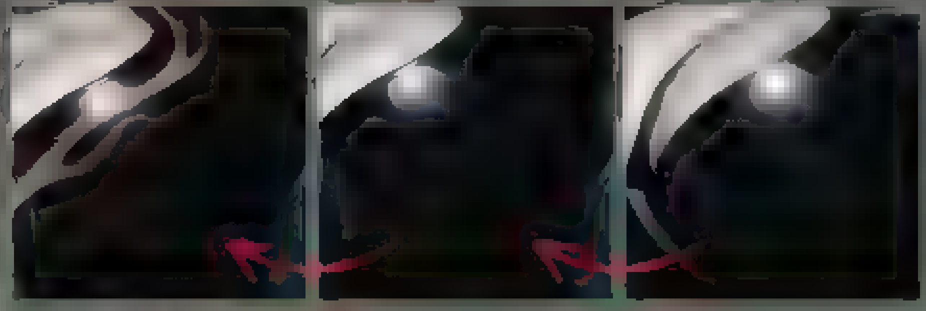
The base coat is created with flat colours. I work on several layers, then merge them when it's finished. I then add some unnatural colours with the [illegible]

Shortcut
Alter colour balance quickly
Ctrl+B (PC)
Cmd+B (Mac)
An easy way to make image-wide colour changes



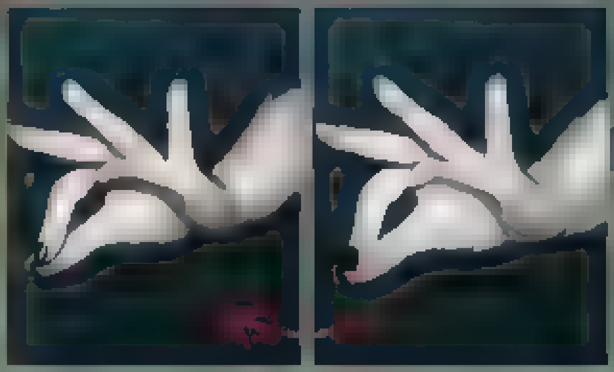
9 Shadow work

A simple method of creating large shadows is to work on a new [illegible] opacity of this layer, or set it as a Multiply layer.



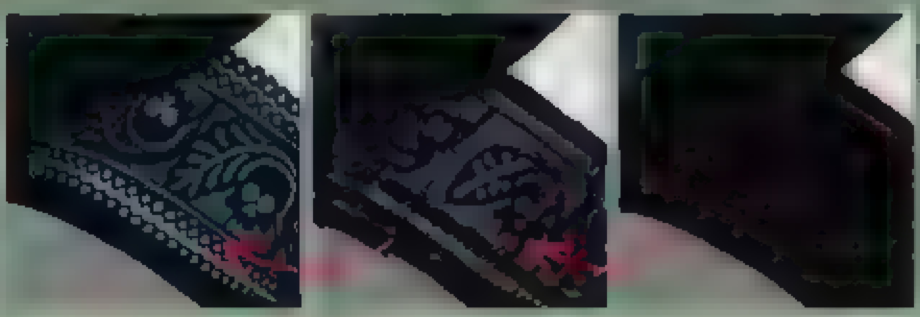
10 Dress considerations

Originally I wanted to dress the pin-up in a vinyl outfit, like a typical Sorayama girl. But vinyl is reflective – it almost acts like a chrome surface – and the background is too dark. In the end, I plump for a leather dress. The flames [illegible] painted look using the Smudge Tool.



11 Finger poses

A pin-up's hands never look particularly natural. Take a look [illegible] pin-up girls and try to do the same. Tricky, isn't it? To get a good reference for hands, look no further than your webcam. The method is then the same as for the face. The hands need to have an oily look, because my pin-up's been using [illegible] cleansing cream. After the hands, I finish the skin tones on the rest of the girl.



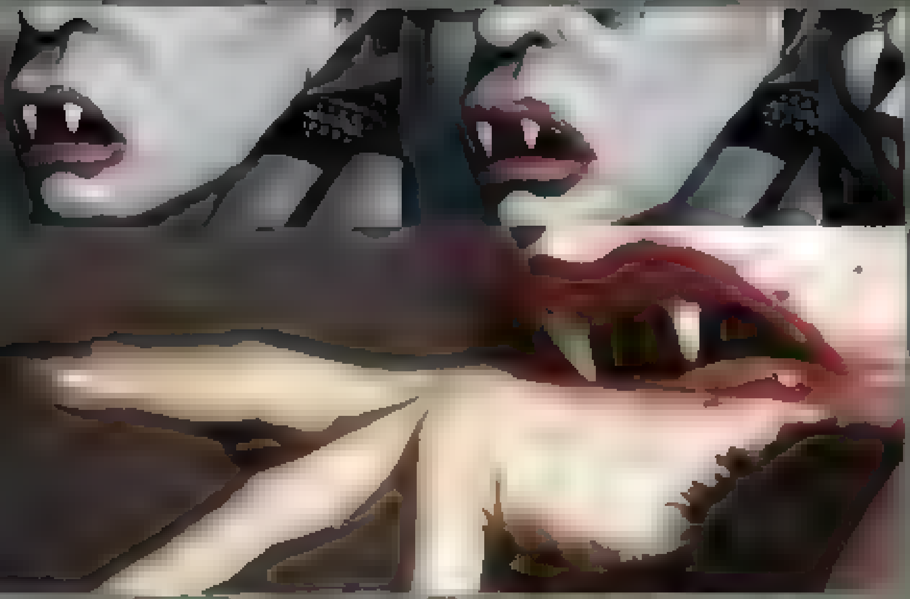
12 Garter details

[illegible] the lace that makes up the garter is a tedious process, I decide to [illegible]

13 Glossy hair

[illegible]

Shortcut
Zoom in/out
and resize window
[illegible]
This is useful when your
image contains plenty
of detail.



15 Background

To be honest, the background isn't that important. I create a graveyard that's lit by a full moon, and throw in some tombstones. It's not an original idea, but the subject matter limits my options. I add a retro lighting scheme and make some minor changes to the characters.

16 Creepy text

You can find a lot of free fonts easily online. The Creepsville font is perfect – it looks like the logo of The Cramps, the legendary 70s American punk band. I deform this font (Edit>Transform), then add it on the cream tube. I achieve the reflections on the tube using the Burn Tool.

PRO SECRETS

Work with a safety net

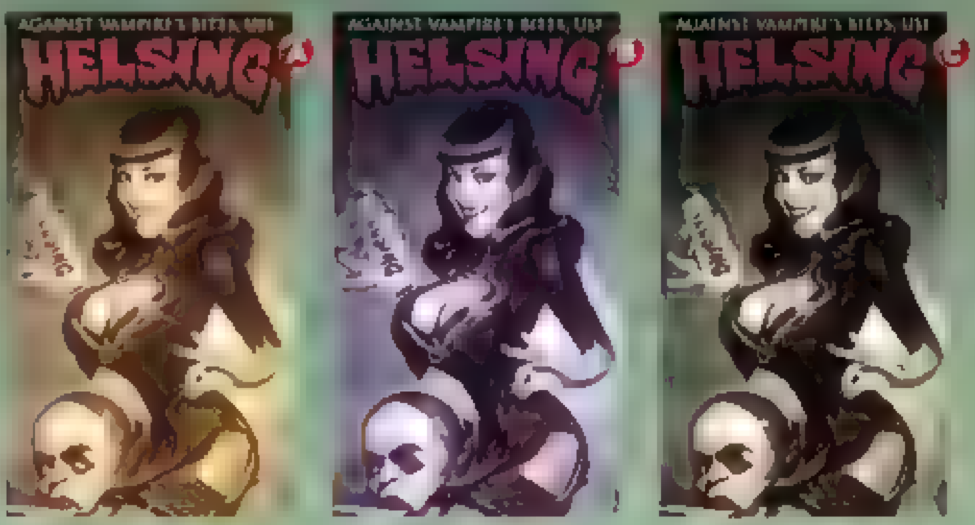
Make frequent backups of your work (I usually hit the 50 mark for a typical composition), and number your backup files incrementally. Don't hesitate to generate a lot of layers – at least one for each new element of your image.

14 [illegible]

[illegible] interpretation of a vampire to use in th[illegible] [illegible] Christopher Lee's! Finally, I go for Klaus[illegible] [illegible]

17 [illegible]

[illegible] combination works best with the subject.



AGAINST VAMPIRE'S BITES, USE
HELSING
AGAINST VAMPIRE'S BITES, USE
HELSING
AGAINST VAMPIRE'S BITES, USE
HELSING

Artist Q&A

Learn from the professionals as our panel of experts tackles real-world portraiture issues

Our panel

Lauren K Cannon

Lauren is a digital fantasy artist who specialises in the surreal. She lives in a small woodland village in New Jersey, US.

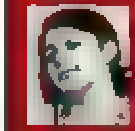
www.[illegible]

Kuang Hong

Based in [illegible], works as an art director at Tencent. He also freelances as an illustrator for novels and other projects.

www.[illegible]

Marta Dahlig



Marta is a self-taught artist who focuses mainly on character painting. In her day job, she creates concept art for mobile gaming titles.

www.marta-dahlig.com

Katarina Sokolova

Katarina is a photographer and digital painter, with a passion for fantasy portraits, and regularly exhibits her work in Kiev.

www.katarinasokolova.com

Emma Vieceli

Emma is a freelance illustrator and comic book artist. Her credits include Comic Book Tattoo. She's also part of Sweatdrop Studios.

www.emmavieceli.com

Henning Ludvigsen

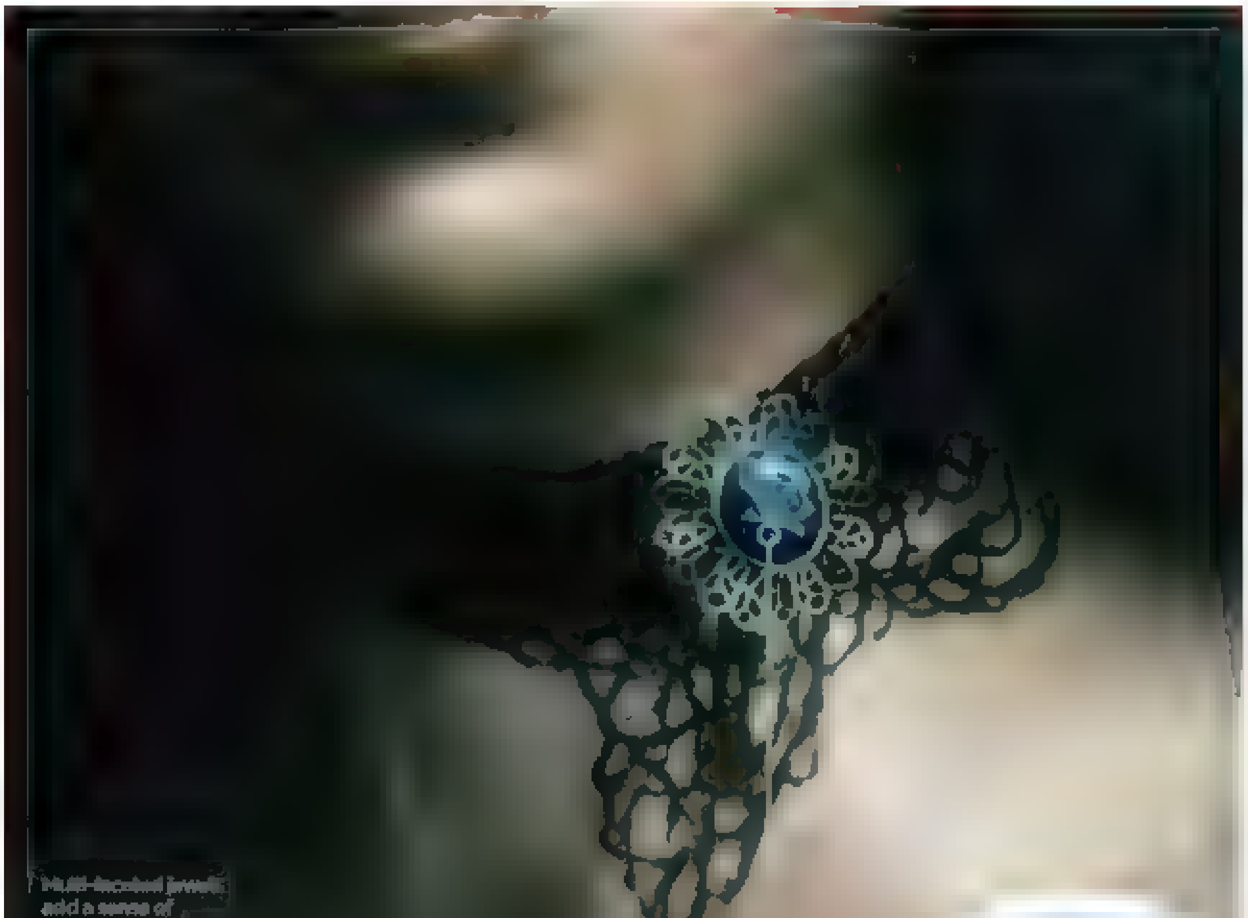
Henning lives in Athens, where he's the art director for the online game Darkfall Online, as well as working on various freelance art projects.

www.henningludvigsen.com

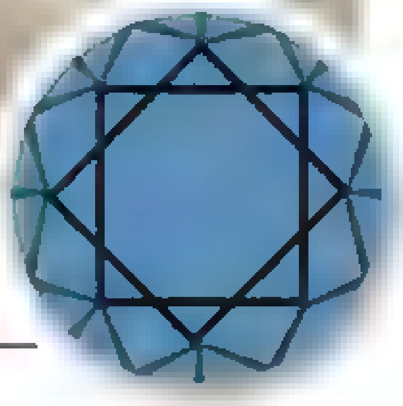
Melanie Delon

Melanie is a freelance illustrator who specialises in fantasy portraits. Her most recent book cover is for the ebook of A Crown of Swords.

www.melaniedelon.com



Multi-faceted jewels add a sense of elegance and opulence to any image, but they are not as complex as they look.



Question
What's the best way to paint the facets of gems in jewellery and accessories?

Answer
Lauren replies

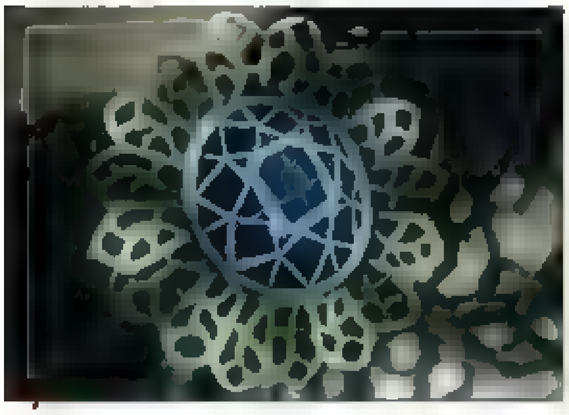
Faceted jewels add a beautiful touch of detail to portraits, but they can be daunting to paint because of how complex they appear. Stock images of jewels aren't much help as reference: they're photographed to look as brilliant as possible, leaving them an incomprehensible mess of highlights to the painter's eye. But for all their glittering, jewels aren't as complicated as they seem.

All stones are cut at flat angles that form basic geometric shapes. The key is to simplify these geometric shapes before you start, then to follow the rules of lighting and perspective to transform those basic shapes into an object with believable depth.

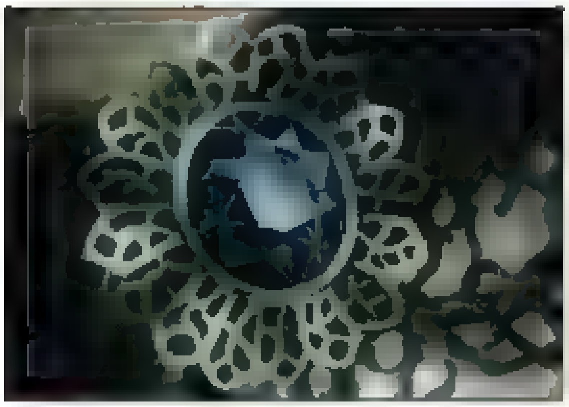
Although painting a jewel with nothing but bright colours is tempting, what makes a jewel seem to glitter is the contrast between light and dark. Many stones in real life are actually quite deeply coloured, and only become bright where the light refracts through them.

Use a highly saturated but dark tone in your jewels to complement the brilliant highlights and give it a better sense of depth. To increase the sense of brilliance, use a layer set to Overlay to pump up the intensity of the colours. Resist the urge to make each facet a solid colour: instead, create gradients and textures within facets to keep the jewel from looking too sterile.

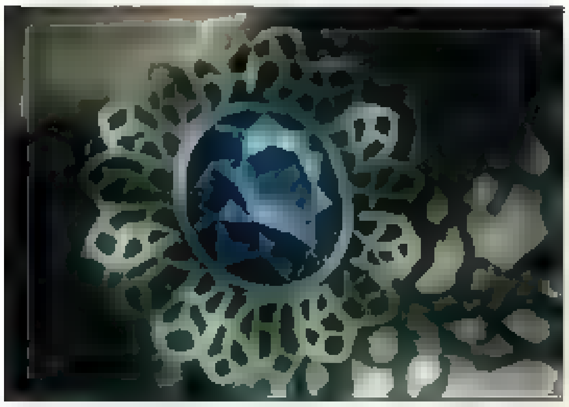
Step-by-step: Painting multi-faceted jewels made easy



1 First, paint whatever object the stone will be set into to help establish lighting and perspective. Before you try to paint the jewel itself, draw line art of the facet shapes on a separate layer. Remember that jewels are three-dimensional: if they're at an angle, the facets should follow perspective rules.



2 Rather than trying to tackle the whole jewel at once, take it one facet at a time. Lower the opacity of your guidelines and begin blocking in colour, starting with the sides that will catch the light. Create a gradient in the centre facet that shows how the light travels through the stone.



3 The jewel should not be a uniform colour: often the direct reflections on the jewel will be a duller shade of white while the inner highlights will be very saturated. Since light will travel through the jewel, even the darkest areas should have some refraction to create interest.

Question

I'm painting a female character in a simple setting in natural light. However, I find a lot of difficulty in painting her against a plain backdrop without the whole image looking flat and boring. How should I treat the colours or make the lighting more interesting?

Answer

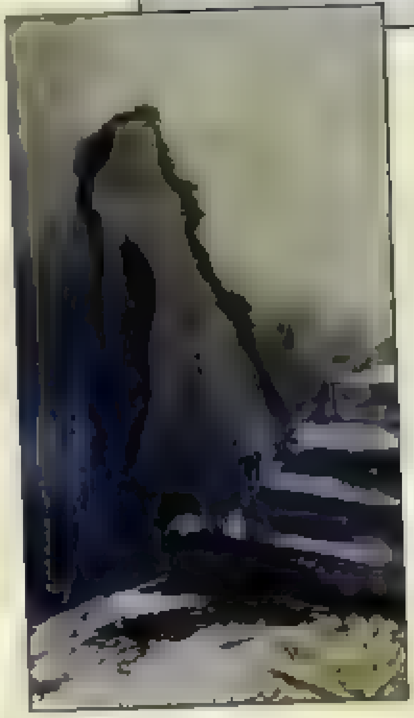
Hong replies

First, construct your sketch's composition where the character is and how she will interact with the background. Just paint big, loose blocks of colour for now. Next, you can start adding lighter details, roughly where some joints, edges and the light and shadow areas may be. This acts as a guideline.

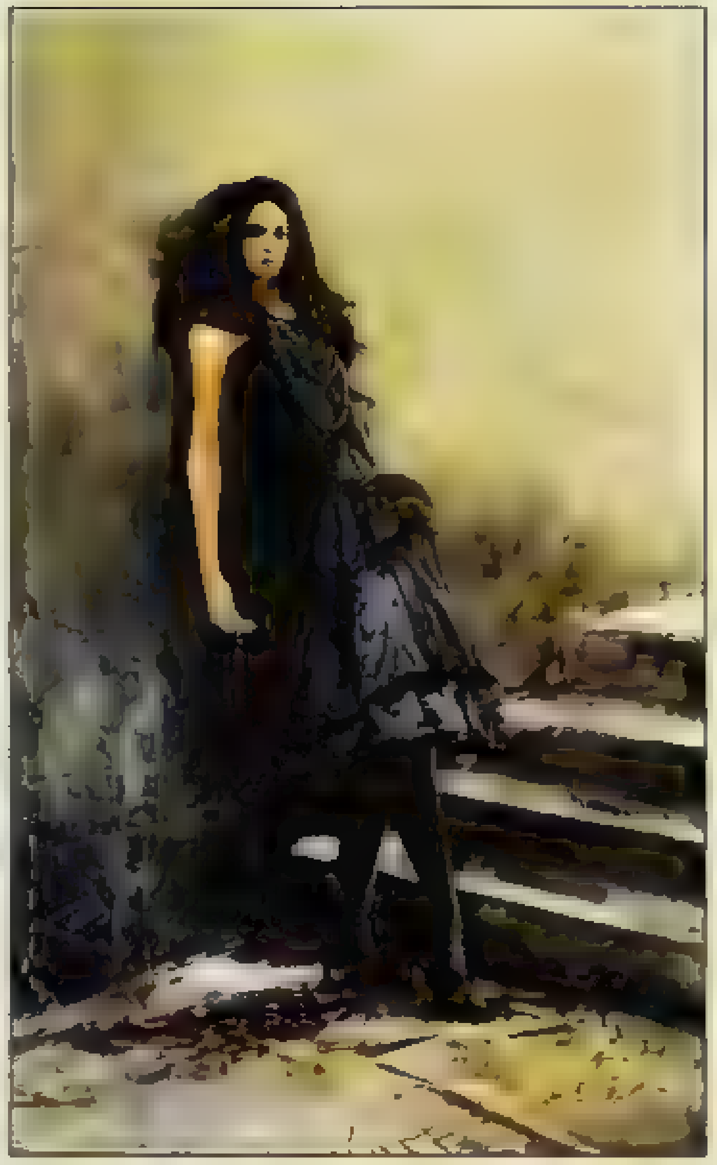
Create a new layer and set its Opacity to between 50 and 60 per cent. With your brush set to Color, lay out your basic colours according to your lighting plan. Here, I'm using yellows to suggest the golden rays of sunset. The areas closer to the light source are brighter, the further parts darker, and those in shadows are close to the darkest tones of yellow-brown. I adjust the layer's Opacity slightly to see how much colour I want, then flatten this layer with the original sketched one, which provides me with most of the shadows.

Pick out some suitable textures for the walls and floors, copy them to a new layer set to Overlay, then erase and paint where needed. Adjust the Opacity.

Pull up the contrast using Curves, towards the top left to brighten the image, towards the bottom right to darken it.



Here I sketched out my composition and added some highlights to my blocked figure to show that the light source is coming from the model's left. When laying out the colours, take note of your planned light source and stick to it. Remember details of highlights and shadows, and don't just colour everything in the hue of the light source.



The three Ds: define, details, darken. Start adding textures and painting details. To finish the piece, refine some highlighted areas with streaks of light in the key area inside the outlines of the figure and objects.

Question
Whenever I try to paint eyebrows, they always look flat and pasted. How can I improve my rendition?

Answer
Lauren replies

Eyebrows may seem like a minor feature of a face, but they're easy to over-think. There's a temptation to paint each little hair, but the trick to making eyebrows look natural has a lot to do with suggesting detail rather than actually painting it. Resist the urge to define each hair, and stay away from brushes that are too small, opaque or hard-edged.

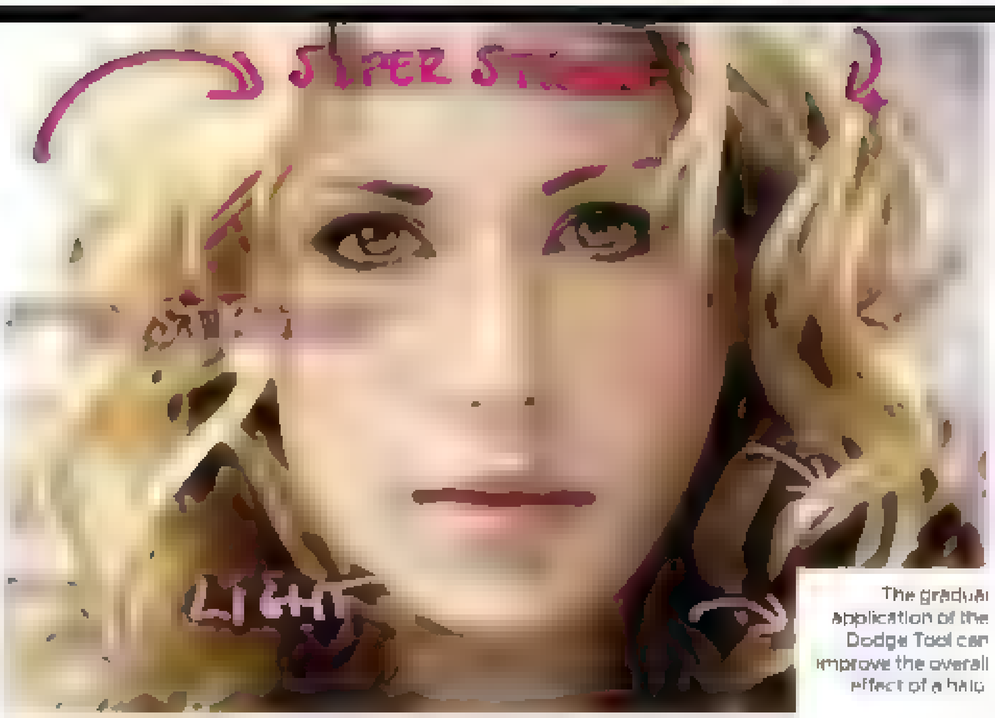
If you're working in Photoshop, use a simple Spackled brush to sketch in the eyebrow. This gives you an excellent base, where the hairs are already suggested. If you use Painter, substitute the Spackled brush for a small Palette Knife and you'll get a similar effect.

Now use a small, soft-edged brush to paint in a few individual hairs with a slightly darker colour, and add a few highlights with the skin colour. Use short, curved strokes; don't be afraid to make them a little messy. Stray hairs and little gaps add individuality to a face. Pay attention to direction: the hairs on the inner end tend to be more vertical, but the hairs on the outer end go sideways or even downwards.

Artist's secret

DON'T FORGET THE BROW BONE

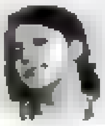
[illegible]



The gradual application of the Dodge Tool can improve the overall effect of a halo

Question
I've read that Dodge shouldn't be used for highlighting. Where should I use it?

Answer
Marta replies



Saying that the Dodge Tool is bad for highlighting is a rather huge generalisation. Basically it's better to avoid it than to use it excessively, but there are some situations where Dodge comes in handy. First, the Dodge Tool can render the [illegible] back-lit flesh effect. Put your hand against a light source: the thinner skin between the fingers is a much lighter and saturated colour. That's where you can use Dodge.

Second, Dodge can be used [illegible] highlights [illegible] especially for [illegible] [illegible] as shown above [illegible] use Dodge [illegible] start on a very low Opacity, then strengthen it as you go.

The Dodge Tool is also perfect for shading metallic parts like armour and jewellery. I usually paint basic shades with my tools of choice, but add the essence by putting in some dodged strokes. If you want extra [illegible] effects, use Dodge with a [illegible] Round brush to [illegible] your metal texture. You can also use Dodge to highlight thin and slippery textures, such as silk.

Dodging with a texture can bring out some wonderful colour-enriching effects quite easily and be very efficient indeed

Question
How do I paint long gloves without them looking just like painted arms?

Answer
Katarina replies

Gloves are not just accessories: they can be the second skin of the hands. But gloves extend beyond the flesh, and you'll need to capture this to render them in a realistic way. Romantic and sexual at the same time, long women's gloves are a visual hallmark of femininity. They have long been the symbol of love and despair, life and death. Throwing them at a person is an insult, but as a gift to a loved one they're a sign of devotion.

Question

I get frustrated when I draw elaborate costumes, because I'm unable to draw the decorative designs. Even if I copy and paste graphic patterns using Photoshop, they don't seem to blend well together. How do I solve this problem?

Answer

Hong replies

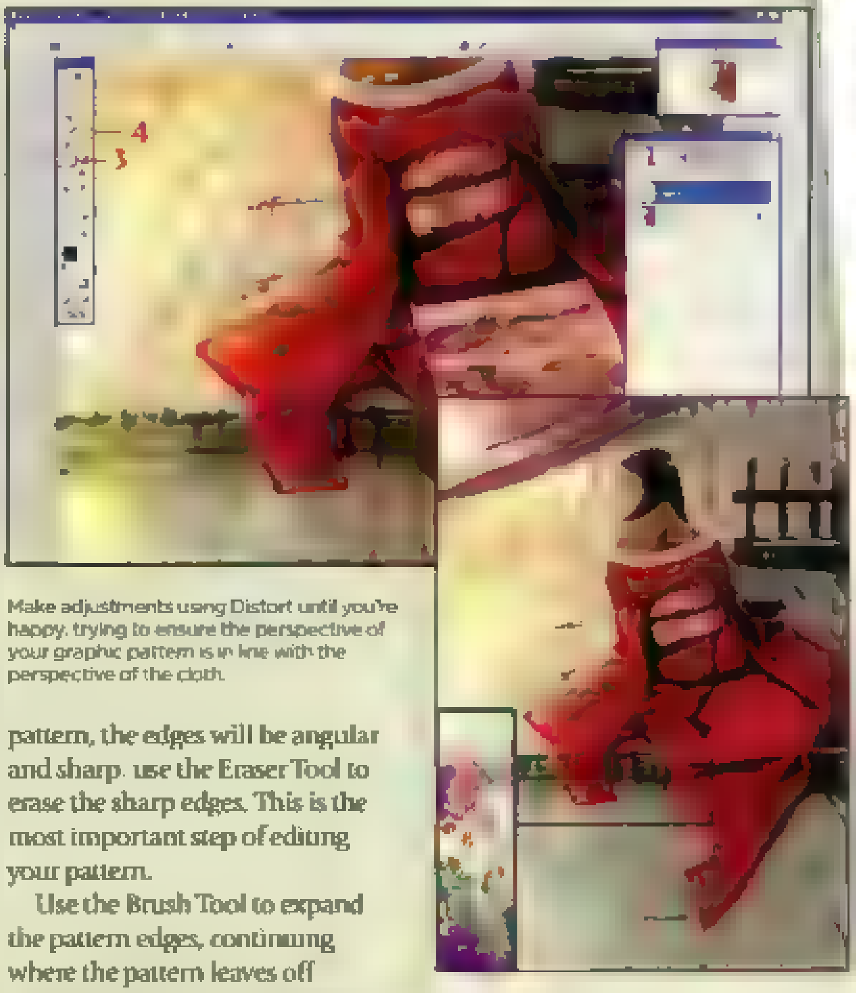
I'm using a rough sketch by artist Zhang Jingna. After deciding on the light source and drawing the background as well as the clothes, remember the folds of the cloth should follow the contours of the floor it lies on. When you draw the costume, visualise what's beneath the cloth.

Now prepare a design for the costume. I choose a pattern taken from a Japanese kimono found on the internet. (This design is free to use, but make sure you check image usage rules from where you obtain them.). The pattern should also not be just pasted in, but used as a base: I usually paint in more than 70 per cent of the final detail.

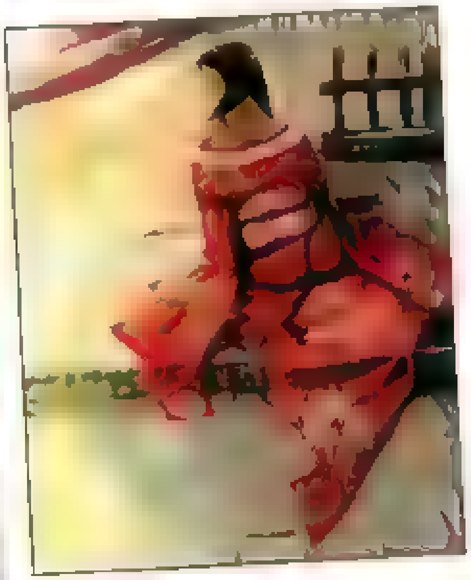
With the pattern on a new layer, shift it so that it is directly on top of where you want to apply it. Alter the Opacity of the pattern, using your eyes as a gauge.

Choose Distort and adjust the pattern as you see fit: try to make it so that the perspective of your graphic pattern is in line with the perspective of the cloth. As you're using a whole image for your pattern, the edges will be angular and sharp: use the Eraser Tool to erase the sharp edges. This is the most important step of editing your pattern.

Use the Brush Tool to expand the pattern edges, continuing where the pattern leaves off. Remember to follow the folds of the cloth, which cause the patterns to be elongated. Then start putting in your own details. Lighten the parts where the cloth is hit by the light, and darken the parts in shadow, enabling the patterns to conform to the lighting conditions your costume is under. If you don't have very good control of painting lighting schemes, you can also use the Dodge and Burn Tool.



Make adjustments using Distort until you're happy, trying to ensure the perspective of your graphic pattern is in line with the perspective of the cloth.



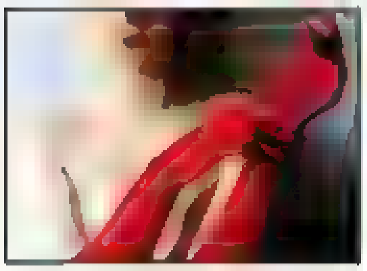
Artist's secret

MAKING GOOD USE OF LAYERS

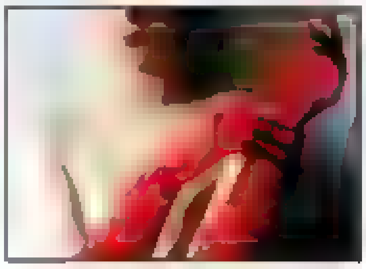
If you're working on your drawing, it [illegible]

Step-by-step: Painting satin gloves

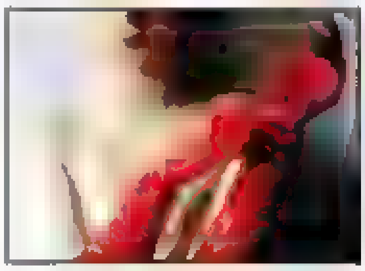
1 Painting satin gloves is rather difficult. They closely adhere to the hands, so the anatomy of the figure should be perfect. In addition, it's necessary to accurately depict folds, small wrinkles and the challenging play of shadows and highlights on the fabric. Without this, any gloves you paint will just look like different spots of paint on your subject's hands. I recommend you look on the web or make colour sketches from real models to build a stock of reference.



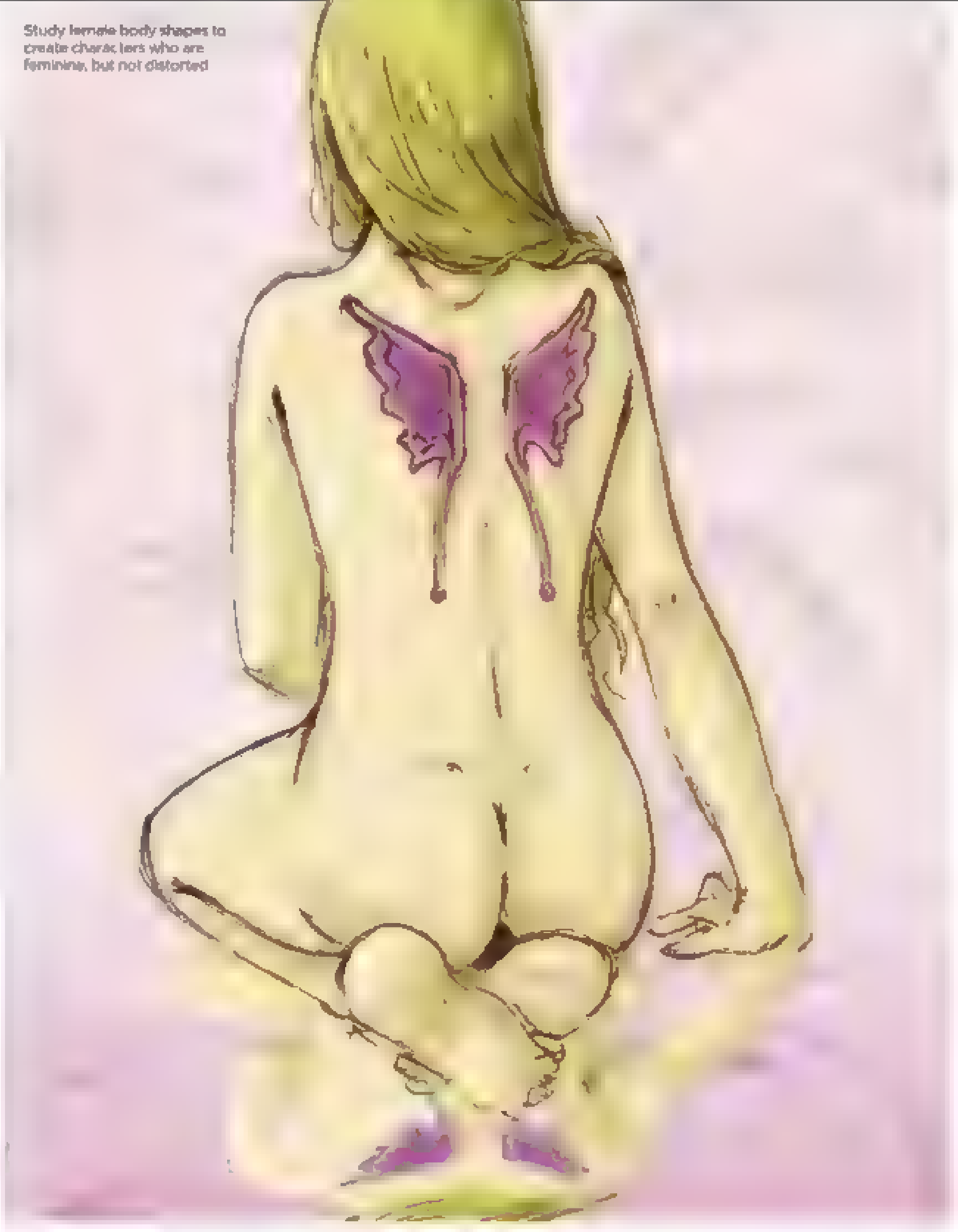
2 I prefer to paint gloves in either black or red. Initially, I cover the surface of the hands with basic colour, using a small, soft brush with an Opacity of 40-45 per cent. Next, I outline the shadows and reflections on the gloves according to the surface of the hands and fingers beneath the surface. In this image, I created two additional shades to do this – dark red, by adding black to the base colour, and pale pink, by adding white and a saturated light blue.



3 The gloves I'm painting have elastic from the wrist to elbow, which creates bunched relief folds. This means the change between flare and shadows is vivid, especially for shiny fabrics. I use only three basic tints and work with a small soft brush that I constantly vary in size and opacity. I add folds and highlights to the curves of palm and fingers, and on the back surface of the hand. Finally, I paint the outline seam on the gloves to create a sense of realism.



Question
What can I do to improve my drawings of female anatomy?



Study female body shapes to create characters who are feminine, but not distorted

Answer
Emma replies

Ideally, your drawing should be able to tell the viewer instantly what gender a character is, without having to rely on facial features or obvious additions. Many artists admit that they prefer drawing women to drawing men: to be frank, women tend to be made up of nicer shapes! Before diving in and thinking about those shapes, however, it's obviously handy to know the basics of human anatomy.

In the sketch below, the figure on the left is ominously free of any additions, and has a fairly androgynous look about it. You could tweak sections either way to make it either male or female.

It's a rather stretched figure at about eight-and-a-half heads high, making it ideal to show how subtle checkpoints can pull any character, tall or short, into proportion.

Elbows always sit at waist level when our arms are straight at our sides. Bear this length in mind, no matter what position the arm is in. Wrists should sit at crotch level or slightly lower. Legs should make up at least half of the full height. For a dramatic, powerful or sexy character, you can push this further. Arms act as a 'proportion glue', pulling stretched or shrunk figures together, so use them as a checkpoint. Now let's adjust our figure.

Tweaking key areas of a previously androgynous figure will make it look obviously female

Step-by-step: Master the key points that define a female body shape

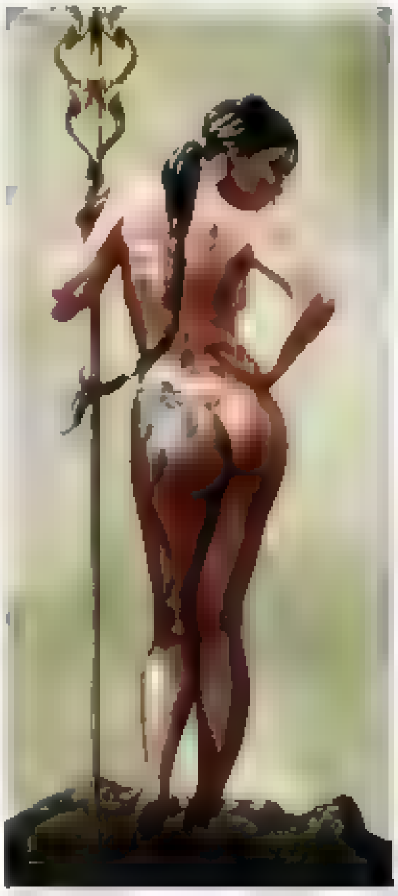
1 Now, I should state the obvious first and say that yes, women have boobs although defining a woman through her breasts is dangerous ground. When drawing breasts, they should fall below the armpit line. A bra may prop them up, but they still grow from the same place.

2 Women have a discernible waistline, unlike men, who instead have a band of muscle. The waist forms the centre of a figure of eight shape. For some, what makes a woman beautiful is her waist-to-hip difference. Feminine clothing will often highlight this difference.

3 Women's hips are as wide as, or wider than, their shoulders; men's hips are narrower than their shoulders. Women are sometimes known to allow babies to appear from between their legs; to facilitate this their legs are placed slightly further apart than a man's. Handy

Question
How do I make wet skin appear believable?

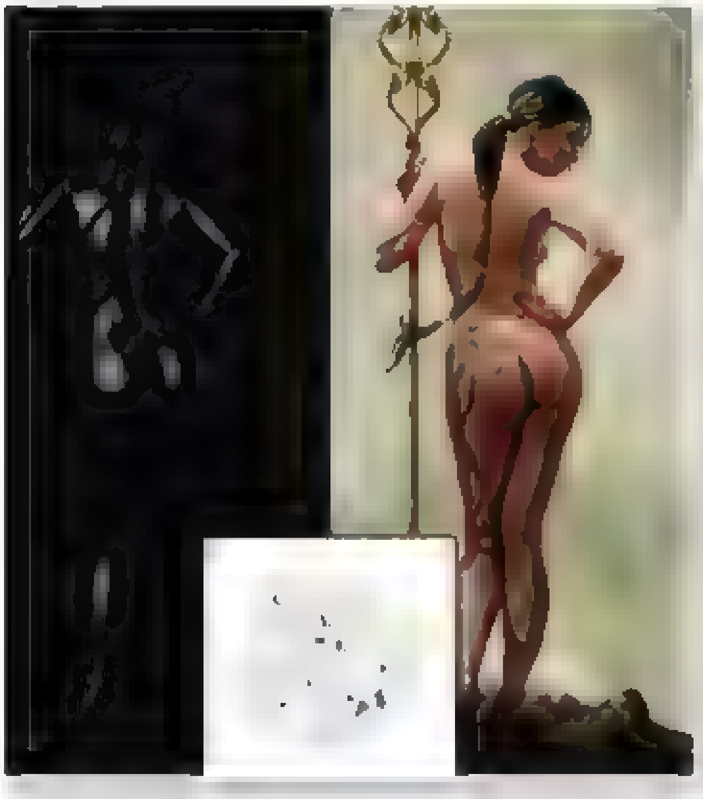
Answer
Henning replies



Playing around with different states of familiar materials like, for example, wet skin can be great fun. You can do this easily, even with an old digital painting you've got lying around. Just to add the final realistic touch.

Wet or sweaty skin can be tricky, but let's focus on creating the illusion of wet skin without actually painting any droplets. Think in 3D and decide which directions the light source would bounce off the different angles of the character's body.

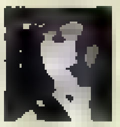
Start off by adding a new layer on top of your base painting, fill it with 100 per cent black and set the layer blending mode to Color Dodge. Here's where you paint the highlights on the skin. Use a noisy, pixelated brush noisy brush strokes give the impression of water or sweat pearls attached to body hair or skin pores. If these highlights are too soft and perfect, it appears more like plastic instead, so grainy highlights are the key to realistic wet skin.



For realism, paint the wet highlights in a new layer set to the Color Dodge blending mode, using a noisy brush. Use a soft brush for a plastic effect

Question
How do I paint stockings to add some sexiness to my female portraits?

Answer
Katarina replies

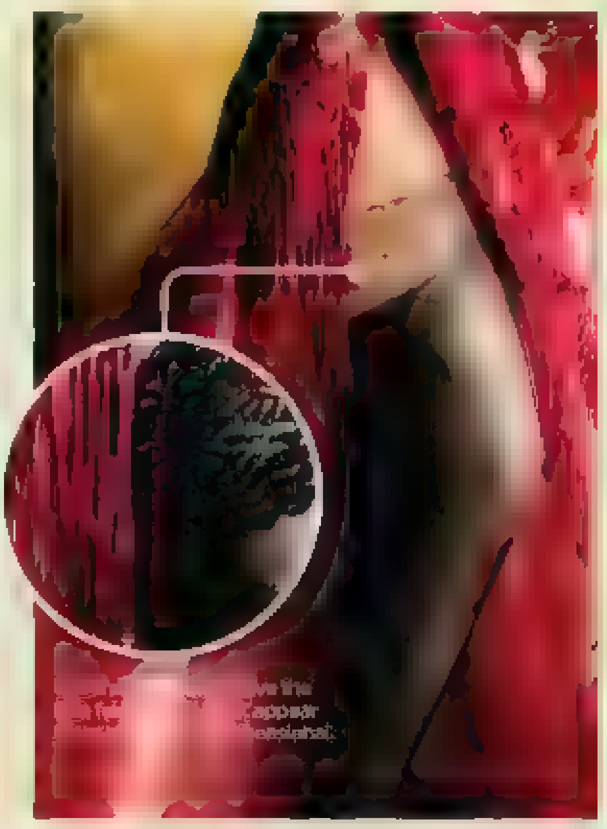


Legs are among the most elegant and sexually attractive parts of the female body. In fact, the only things more beautiful are legs dressed in lace stockings!

Paint stockings as a finishing touch. The skin colour is your base. On a new layer paint over the stocking surface with a soft grey brush set to Multiply, with a large diameter and an Opacity of 10-15 per cent.

With the same grey colour and a small soft brush, add some shadows to the leg surface. Use the same brush with Opacity at around 5 per cent to make smooth white highlights on the stocking's surface to emphasise its silky texture.

I usually paint lace in a dark grey colour, using a soft brush with a small diameter and around 20 per cent Opacity to create a flower-like pattern. Add volume by adding short strokes with a soft, light grey brush set to 10 per cent Opacity.



Question
How can I bring more movement to hair in my paintings?

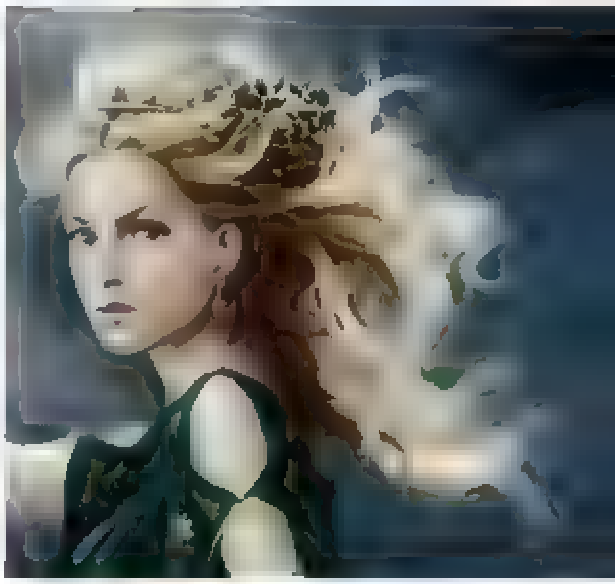
Answer
Melanie replies

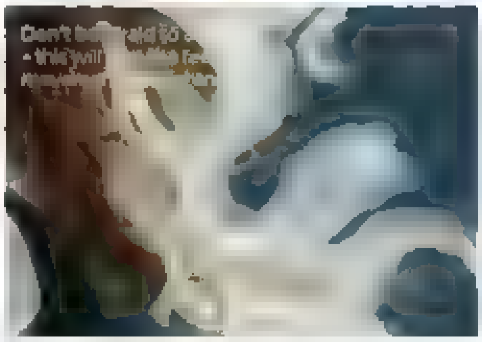
Adding movement to hair in illustration is important. Even if a character isn't moving, the hair isn't static and is never pasted to the skin, unless you're going for a stylised look. Adding some wild locks gives a more natural look to any haircut.

In this painting, there's a lot of wind, so her hair should be messy and flying all over the place. To achieve this, I start by drawing the base of the hair, then smooth and texture it. I erase the extremities with a Spackled brush and smooth them again.

Next, I add some light to the extremities using the same shade as the sky – a bluish green that will blend well with the blonde hair. It isn't necessary to do this precisely. I lay the colour down with a low-opacity Basic Round Edge, and apply it all over by following the movement of her hair. Once it's done, I blur and erase certain parts to get rid of all the noticeable brush strokes.

Then I duplicate the layer and change its mode to Soft Light with 4 per cent Opacity, to give the hair more contrast.





Question
How do I create cool make-up for a fantasy female portrait?

Answer
Katarina replies

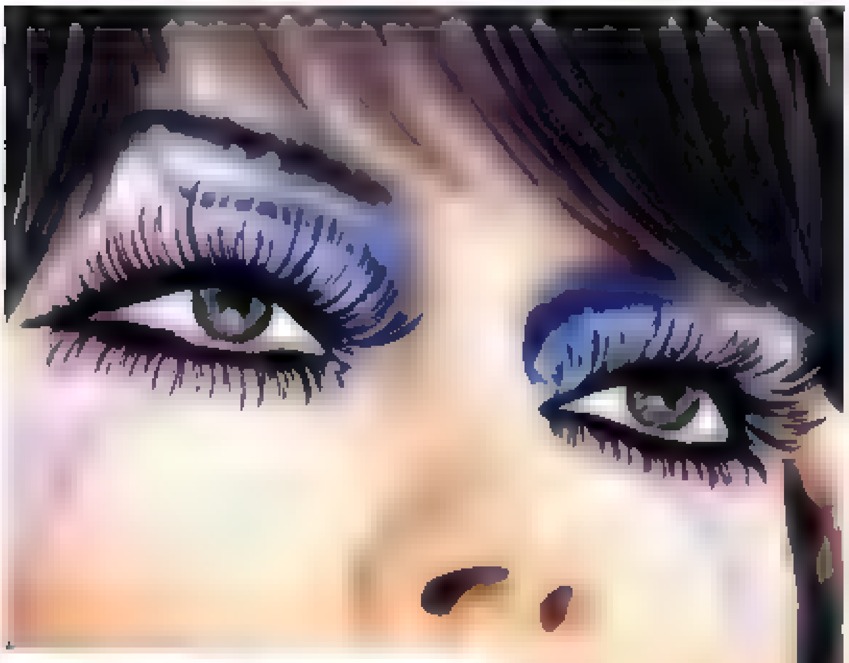
What's the difference between a normal portrait and a fantasy one? It's the presence of those fabulous details that you can't see in ordinary life, but that exist in the world of the fantasy portrait – for example, fantastic make-up, which can be classified as very bright, extravagant and a bit provocative because of its unexpected colour combinations.

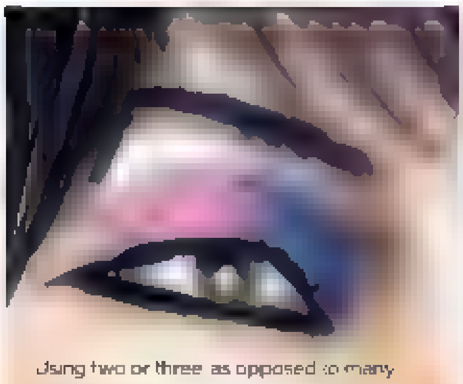
I love to watch fashion and beauty photo sessions, drawing ideas for my future images from them. To paint fantasy make-up I collect reference from the web, look through glamour magazines and advertisements, and haute couture catwalk shows.

I prefer to mix a maximum of two to three colours into the make-up, and usually create highly fantasised eye make-up. My signature [illegible] [illegible] with [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

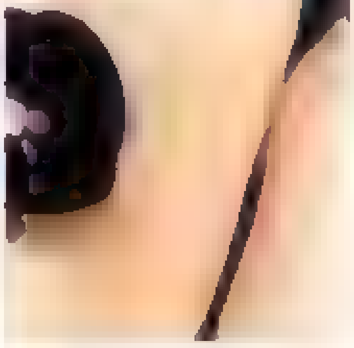
For the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] using Airbrush Variable Splatter.

With such saturated make-up I prefer to emphasise the eyelashes with a contrasting colour and paint them alternately black and light pink, and make them longer than they would be in real life for an extra touch [illegible]





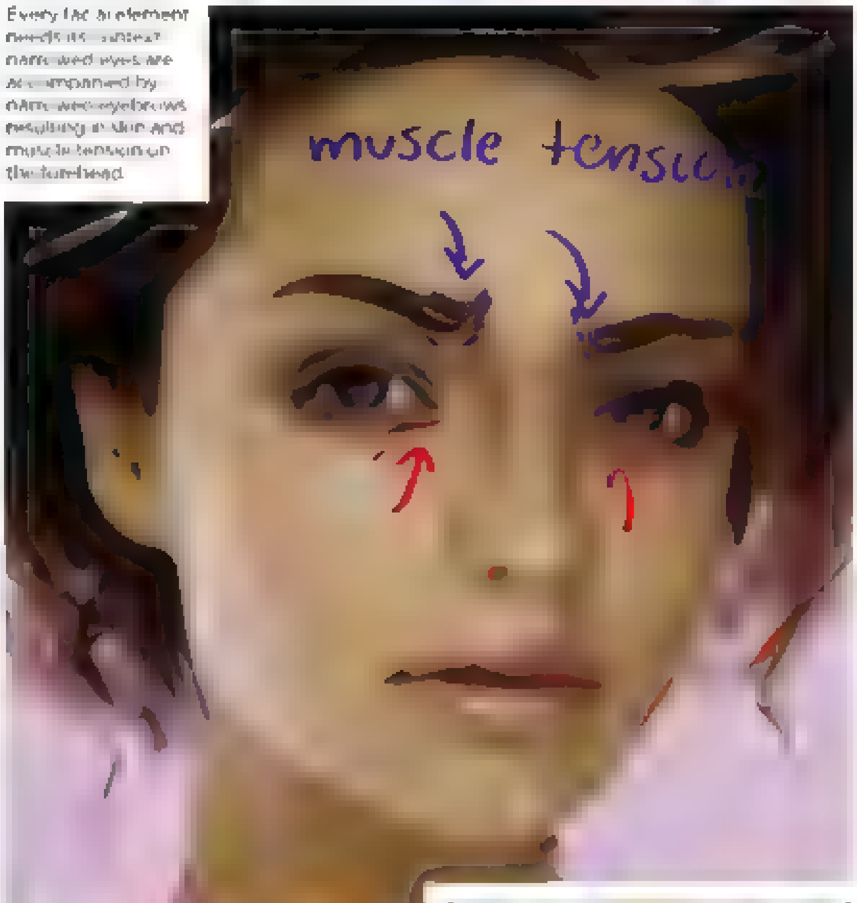
Using two or three as opposed to many strong colours will help you create more effective, powerful fantasy make-up



Fantasy portraits are defined by their unnatural, unusual subjects. Push your fantastical make-up further with exaggerated size and shading.

Question
My character portraits always look very dull and artificial, like dolls. How can I make them feel alive?

Every facial element needs its context: narrowed eyes are accompanied by narrowed eyebrows, resulting in skin and muscle tension on the forehead



Detailing previously defined eyes creates a wonderful focal point and lots of emotion

Answer
Marta replies

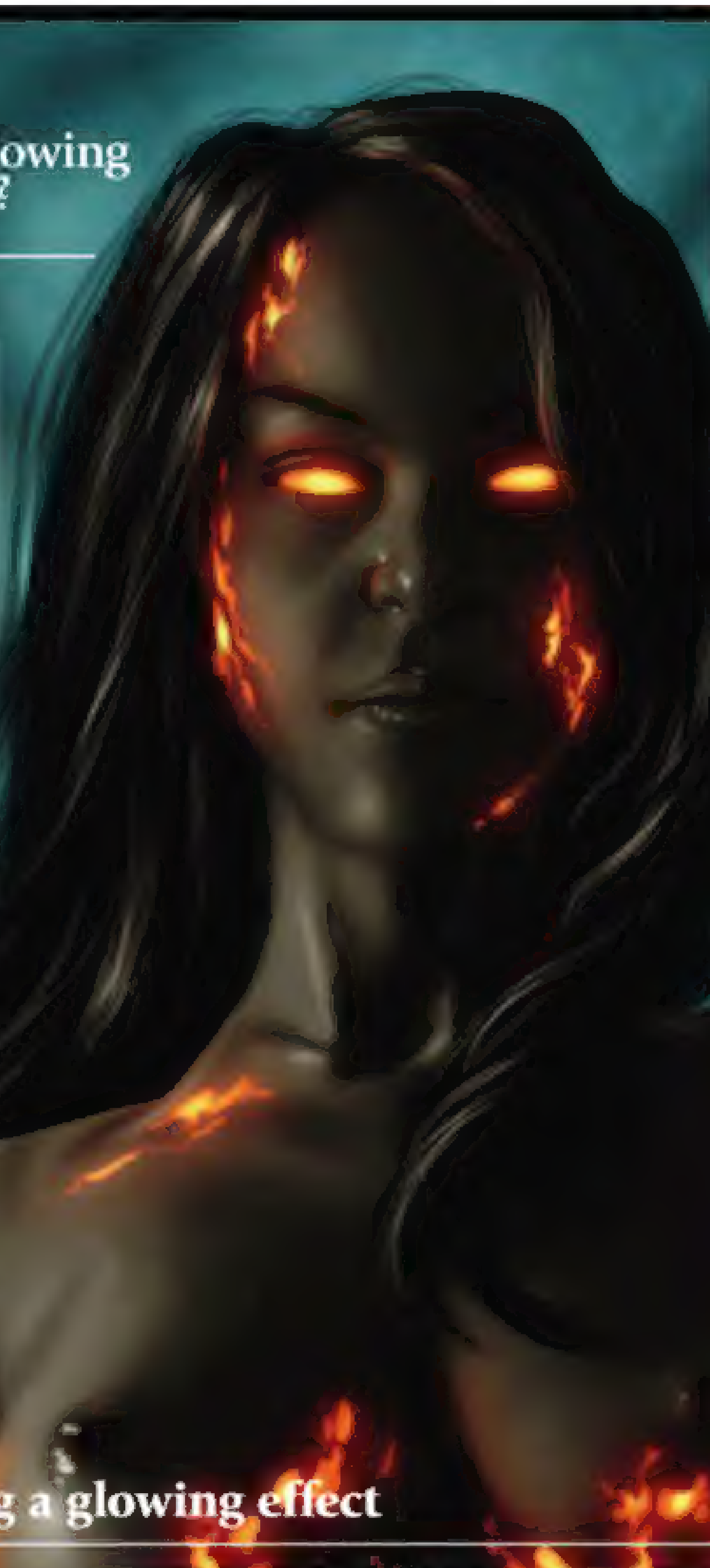
Whether you're painting a bust portrait or a full body piece, the crucial way to add a spark to any character is the correct definition of the face. That's done on two levels – theoretical and technical, of which theory is the more important.

First, you have to decide on your character's facial expression. Whether it's an extreme emotion like anger, sadness or happiness, or something more calm like regret or apathy, you should always define every face with three elements: the eyes, the eyebrows, and the interaction of the mouth (not only the lips, but the whole jaw) with the face muscles. For example, gritting the teeth strengthens the jaw line, opening the mouth causes the cheeks to change their convexity, and so on.

As far as technical pointers go, there are a few tricks that can really help to bring out that spark in your characters. If you're going for a realistic effect, concentrate your efforts on the focal point – which is usually the eyes. You can do this by adding an eye-catching element (such as vivid makeup) or by some thorough detailing.

In any case, always use the following tip: when defining the iris remember to add some colour spots on top of it to break the midtone colour – but most importantly, paint in a small light reflex with the Airbrush tool. This is an incredibly easy task, but can result in amazing results – be sure to compare the difference in before and after shots.

Question
How do I achieve a glowing effect in my portraits?

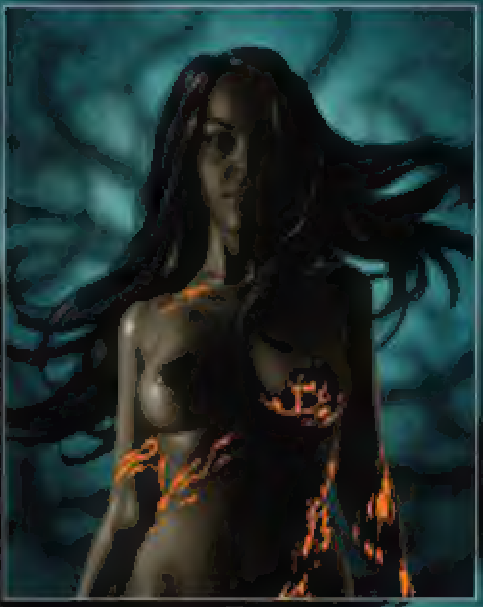


Answer
Henning replies

Adding details such as glowing effects can be a lot of fun and the end result can add a lot to your piece. The effect we'll be doing here can be used for everything, from cool-looking logos to effects in your paintings, as well as being applied to the skin, as shown here. Overdoing this effect can make your composition confusing and hard to read, so make sure you take your time. Don't scatter them your glowing details throughout your piece: place them carefully and deliberately.

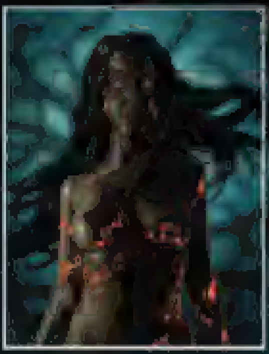
This effect is pretty simple to do, and can be achieved quite quickly. It's easy to adjust as it's added in separate layers.

One important thing to keep in mind when adding glowing elements to your art is that high contrast is the key to achieving the right effect. Having glowing elements on a bright surface probably won't work as well as it would if the surface was darker. For this example, I wanted to paint a fire elemental girl and decided to keep her skin fairly dark to make the glowing parts more exaggerated. The soft glow around the cracks makes it all seem more intense, and adds realism and atmosphere to the piece. Always use strongly saturated, warm colours for fire and glowing effects like this.

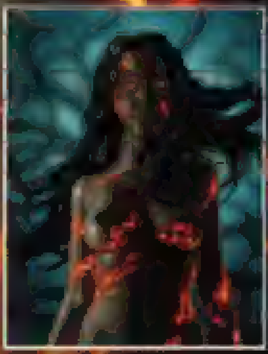


High contrast is the key to achieving a glowing effect. Here, the bright orange cracks stand out well and look exaggerated against the girl's dark skin.

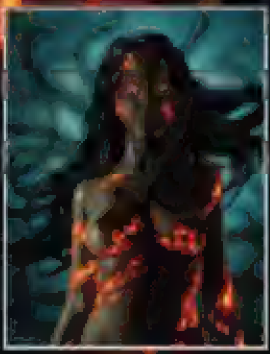
Step-by-step: Adding a glowing effect



① Add a new layer and paint the cracks and spots where you want to add the glowing effect. Use a strong, highly saturated orange colour. Make sure to use a hard brush to keep your details as sharp as possible, then add some variation in intensity to the cracks using the Dodge Tool set to Highlights mode.



② Make a copy of the cracks layer and place it behind the original. Adjust the colour of the cracks in this layer to a reddish orange and run it through a high-value Gaussian Blur filter. Add an orange outline to the cracks before you blur them for a stronger glow. Set the layer blending mode to Hard Light and play with the layer's Opacity.



③ Add another copy of the layer with the glowing cracks, but this time place it at the top of the layer stack. Add a smaller amount of Gaussian Blur and set the layer's blending mode to Color Dodge. Paint some light bouncing off suitable places, either in existing layers or on a new layer set to Hard Light. ●

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